

FIFA 17: LATEST DETAILS FROM THE EA DUGOUT

PLAY



ISSUE
273

260

PS4 & VITA
GAMES RATED

PREPARE FOR...

TITANFALL 2

AN EXOTIC EXPANSION
**DESTINY:
RISE OF IRON**

PS4 PS3 Vita PSN WelcomePLAY

A legendary titan in the wonderful world of PlayStation



04 PREPARE FOR TITANFALL 2

EA's hit mech shooter
finally explodes onto PS4

12 WHERE NEXT FOR
CALL OF DUTY?

26 DESTINY'S BRIGHT
FUTURE EXPLORED

52 CRASH BANDICOOT:
CELEBRATING AN ICON

ONE MECH, PLEASE



FOR BETTER OR for worse, *Overwatch* has conditioned me to hate robots. Time and time again, I'm treated to a Play Of The Game that showcases an incredible degree of skill at

holding down R2 (I know how to counter it, but I'm amazed by how few others seem to be able to resist wandering around in his kill zone) and as a result, I'm sick of seeing robots.

Mechs, on the other hand... well, that's a different story. Whether it's stomping around in them in the likes of *EDF* and *Lost Planet* or boosting around as D.Va making Bastions look silly in *Overwatch*, I always love hopping into an oversized metal exoskeleton and wreaking havoc. In light of this, I'm naturally hugely excited that EA has decided to play nice and bring the sequel to what is one of the Xbox One's best console exclusives to PS4. Those who played *Advanced Warfare* will have a rough idea of what to expect from Respawn's shooter while on-foot – fast and fluid acrobatic movement fused with tight gunplay, basically – but calling in your Titan is the real game-changer here.

Working towards a Super in *Destiny* or an *Overwatch* Ultimate usually has a brief payoff but in *Titanfall*, the prize for playing well is your very own mech. Suit up and you'll notice a massive shift in the feel of the game, from the frantic intensity of infantry combat to the oh-so-empowering act of stomping around a battlefield, watching enemies scatter like ants beneath you. Then another pilot calls in *their* Titan and all of a sudden, you find yourself locked into an epic mech duel, with your ride on the line should you mess up. Honestly, the flow of the game is like nothing else out there, and it's all kinds of awesome.

So yeah, in summary: robots bad, mechs good. Sorry, Clank, but that's just the way it is.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

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PLAY+ Contents

Your one-stop guide to this month's mechstraordinary line-up

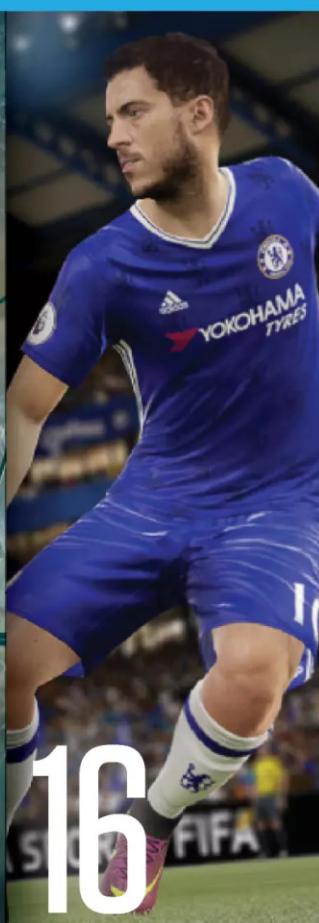
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04

STANDBY FOR TITANFALL 2

EA's sensational shooter explodes onto PlayStation 4 at long last



16

WHAT'S NEW IN FIFA 17?

The team explains this season's changes



26

UNDER THE IRON BANNER

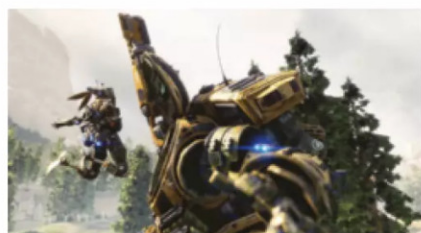
Destiny's next major expansion detailed



56

REBOOTING RESIDENT EVIL

Discussing the demo with the producer



FEATURES

- 4 Titanfall 2
- 28 Your Shout
- 30 Ten Of The Best: Four-Letter Games
- 32 Biggest Breakout Games
- 52 Play Classics: Crash Bandicoot



PREVIEWS

- 12 COD: Infinite Warfare
- 14 God Of War
- 16 FIFA 17
- 18 The Last Guardian
- 20 Days Gone
- 22 Gravity Rush 2
- 24 Injustice 2
- 26 Destiny: Rise Of Iron



REVIEWS

- 38 Lego The Force Awakens
- 40 Abzu
- 42 Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness
- 44 Prison Architect
- 46 I Am Setsuna
- 48 Overcooked
- 50 Headlander



PLAY+ PLUS

- 56 Interview: Resident Evil 7
- 58 Extended Play: Overwatch
- 60 PS Plus Trophy Guide
- 62 Join The Play Community
- 64 You Haven't Played...
- 66 Playlist



A promotional image for the video game Titanfall 2. The background shows a futuristic city with a large stadium-like structure in the distance. In the foreground, several soldiers in combat gear are engaged in a battle. One soldier is in the center, aiming a weapon. To the left, another soldier is crouching. To the right, a third soldier is standing. In the bottom right corner, a yellow vehicle is partially visible. A large yellow circle with a dashed border is centered over the image, containing the title and a subtitle.

STANDBY FOR TITANFALL 2

CAN RESPAWN'S RETURN DO
ENOUGH TO COMPETE IN THE
CONGESTED FPS SPACE?



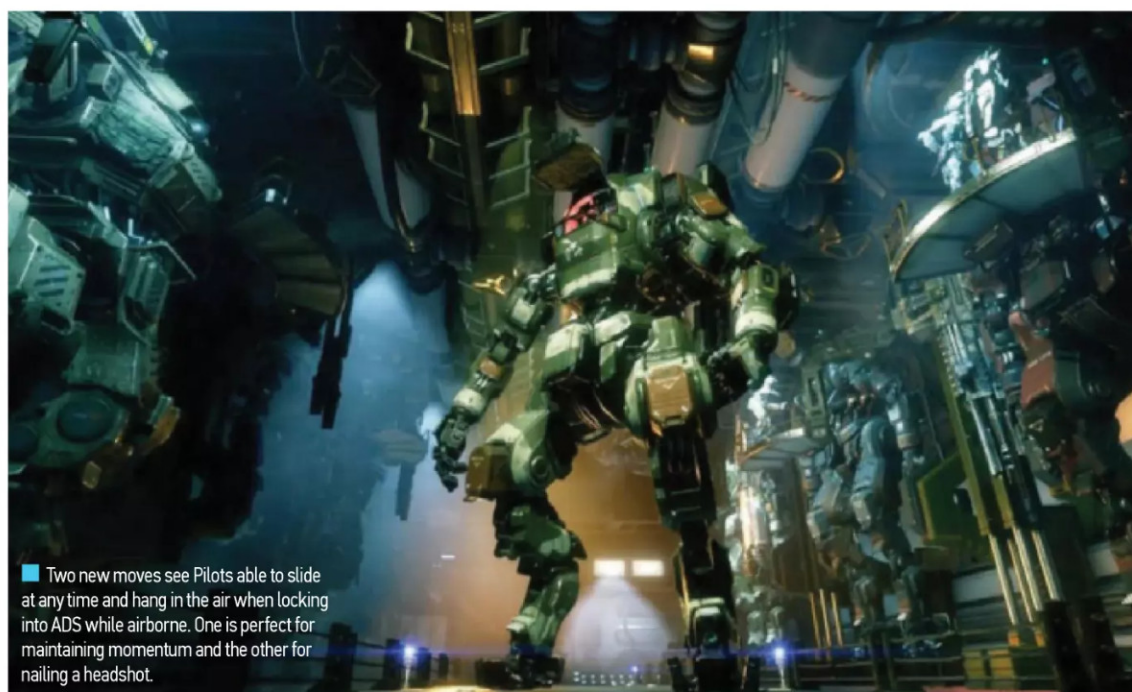
itanfall was supposed to define a new generation of shooters. It shot

for the stars, skirting the surface of legendary status before plummeting into the shadowy depths of the Xbox One storefront to be largely forgotten. But Respawn Entertainment founders Jason West and Vince Zampella expected better when it established the studio in 2010. The duo set out to achieve the impossible, to create a FPS that would have as much impact as their most famous creation: *Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*.

But so many others had tried and failed to re-create the success of *Modern Warfare* – how could an unproven and comparatively small studio ever hope to compete in the same space as its peers? It seemed like an impossible ambition, that was, until you took your first steps into the Frontier in 2014. *Titanfall* arrived with style and speed, pitting nimble Pilots and majestic mechs into battle on some of the finest map design seen in a decade. Its fluidity was awe-inspiring for the observer and, for the player, it was loud and chaotic – everything we had been looking for from the genre after *Call Of Duty* began gradually backing away from genre innovation in favour of tiresome iteration.

If one complaint could always be levied at *Titanfall*, it was that it lacked a tangible sense of tactical depth or progression, but that's where a sequel can step in and remedy the mistakes of the past. Respawn may have other projects in the pipeline, but there was no way it could leave *Titanfall* behind; there's too much unfinished business. *Titanfall 2* is currently scheduled to launch on 28 October – sandwiched between *Battlefield 1*, *Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare* and (funnily enough) the *Modern Warfare* remaster – and it's a game that is inherently bigger in almost every conceivable sense. An excellent foundation has already been laid and now is time for Respawn to show the world that it has what it takes to build upon it in an impressive, industry defining fashion.

Can *Titanfall 2* possibly push the shooter genre forward in the way Respawn has always dreamed its series could? We've gone hands-on with it, we've put it through its paces and we've documented the changes, the updates and made note of the early warning signs. We honestly don't know if we can wait any longer for release.



Two new moves see Pilots able to slide at any time and hang in the air when locking into ADS while airborne. One is perfect for maintaining momentum and the other for nailing a headshot.

FEET OFF THE GROUND

DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE CHANGES COMING TO PILOTS FIGHTING FOR THE FRONTIER

How do you empower the FPS player that has already been handed the world and subsequently blown it to pieces with double-barrelled shotgun? This is a question that has puzzled developers for years, at a loss with where to take the genre following a decade of erratic escalation. But Respawn found the solution: by making you woefully underpowered – surrounded by towering walking battle tanks – you're forced to find freedom and power within the act of movement itself.

The small, feeble looking runners easily tangled underfoot of a Titan or seen bounding across rooftops to escape enemy wildfire; they were the key to the whole *Titanfall* experience.

Thankfully, Respawn has brought the Pilots back largely unchanged for *Titanfall 2*. The game has an unparalleled sense of momentum to it that has a way of making you feel unstoppable. There's a simple satisfaction to be found in chaining parkour moves together across an open space as a battle rages beneath your feet. Sweeping through an environment with a

connection of wall runs, double-jumps and perfectly timed slides is only made all the sweeter when it ends with a glorious enemy headshot; mastering motion, that's the real magic of *Titanfall 2*.

The game is designed in such a way that you're always moving faster when your feet are attached to a wall rather than the floor and Respawn has made it even easier to get airborne than its predecessor thanks to the introduction of a grappling hook for certain Pilot classes. Six will be in the final game – each with its own unique tactical ability – though the grapple will undoubtedly be the standout.

While the Pilots feel heavier to manoeuvre, with Respawn seemingly ripping out a degree of skill to make it more accessible [see: Critical Changes] the studio has made some attempt to make sure all players feel like they are making the most of their time as a Pilot – instead of standing by for *Titanfall* in order to survive.

"There are a few new abilities that allow you to move around quicker; we've added a slide, it boosts



TACTICAL ABILITIES

THREE OF THE SIX NEW TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION DETAILED

GRAPPLE

Used for quickly moving across the map, making use of the verticality and pulling enemies in closer, Grapple is the standout addition to *Titanfall 2*. A swinging mechanic hasn't felt this intuitive since *Spider-Man 2* back in 2004 – and yes, you can quote us on that.



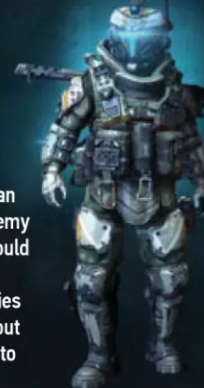
PULSE BLADE

Active Radar Pulse has been replaced by the Pulse Blade, a projectile that carries dual uses. Not only can it be used to one-hit kill enemy Pilots, but driving one into a surface will also provide a brief sonar pulse that detects enemy movement in your immediate vicinity.



HOLO PILOT

Designed to assist snipers, Holo Pilot mimics the Pilot's last move in a surprisingly lifelike fashion. This can be used to send an enemy chasing shadows or could be used statically on a rooftop, leading enemies thinking they were about to score an easy kill into a deadly trap.





■ Respawn isn't willing to go into details just yet, but *Titanfall 2* will feature a large array of customisation options. A larger selection of weapon attachments and skins is almost a given considering the feedback to the original game.



■ Alongside an array of returning weapons, such as the Hemlock SMG and Kramer sniper rifle, *Titanfall 2* is introducing a host of all-new energy weapons that have impressed during early tests.

“JUMP SPEED AND JUMP HEIGHT HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. IN FACT, YOUR PILOT SEEMS HEAVIER THAN EVER BEFORE”

momentum and adds to the chaining of abilities. Slide, double-jump, wall run, clip and repeat the process to get around faster than ever,” Todd Alderman, *Titanfall 2*'s lead multiplayer designer tells us, adding, “Grapple is a new tactical ability which allows you to get to specific locations directly or use your momentum to swing around corners.” Alderman undersells it, because the grappling hook is the single greatest addition to the game that we could have hoped to see. It can be attached to anything in a map and its application seems limitless. It can be released to assist with wall runs and used to gain access to higher areas of the maps without breaking your stride. You can use it to shift the momentum of a run entirely, leaving enemy players tracking your positions desperately turning heel, or you can use it to latch onto an enemy Titan from afar; rappelling immediately onto its back for a quick assault will always be entertaining.

“It's diverse,” notes Alderman. “There are a lot of ways to use it, [but the] new abilities now have counter-plays. For instance, a new ordnance is the gravity star, which is this throwing star that sticks into the ground and sucks enemies and projectiles into it. If you have grapple, then you can escape this instance before it sucks you up and inevitably kills you. So an escape mechanism, speed-boost and also a way to get vertical too.”

Titanfall 2 is fast and fun, and we didn't exactly expect anything less from Respawn's sequel. It's still so impressive to see a player take on a machine again and again and walk away the victor. While Respawn has made a lot of tweaks to the core gameplay experience and upgraded the Titans' battlefield capability, it's while you're flying through the air that *Titanfall 2* feels completely untouchable in this year's battle for FPS genre supremacy.



CRITICAL CHANGES

EARLY CAUSES FOR CONCERN

Titanfall 2 still has a few months of playtesting and tweaking ahead of it. And for good reason – we've already identified a couple of areas that concern us, particularly in the way that Pilots interact with the environment. To be clear, the game is still incredibly fun – unlike anything else on the market in fact – though some of these decisions may baffle *Titanfall* veterans...

HEAVIER CHARACTERS

In the version of *Titanfall 2* we played, both jump speed and jump height had been significantly reduced. Your character feels heavier than before and that increased weight seems to have made an impact on the over-the-top parkour antics that made the original game so frantic; they don't exist anymore. It's still fast, but a little more tempered.

PILOT VULNERABILITY

Perhaps it's because Respawn was eager to show off its array of new Titans in this early build, but the Pilots felt slightly less empowering and far more vulnerable in *Titanfall 2*. There's more danger and that meant more time looking at a respawn screen. That isn't to say it's any less fun, but it's worth being aware of the improved threat from Titans.

BUNNY HOP

This is one of those design decisions that's difficult to understand. Play *Titanfall* for long enough and you begin to pick up some tricks, such as bunny hopping to get a momentum boost – that is to say, timing your jumps and landings perfect to the frame. The pro-level tactic has been removed, which is a little disappointing really.

LACK OF CUSTOMISATION

We're raising this concern now, though it's likely this could change before launch. So much focus is being put into the set classes that we're concerned *Titanfall 2* will suffer from the same lack of customisation options as its predecessor. Grenades can be switched out, but we want the ability to mix up weapons and tactical abilities.

A DAVID AND GOLIATH STORY

INTRODUCING THE NEW TITAN CLASSES

The Atlas, Ogre and Stryder chassis have been decommissioned as *Titanfall 2* brings six new Titan designs into the fold. Respawn has spent much of the last two years assessing critical and fan feedback, paying particular attention to complaints levied against the Titan-on-Titan combat. As a result, a lot of time and resources have gone into ensuring

that there's more tactical depth to clambering into the belly of one of these hulking mechanical beasts. The changes are immediately identifiable. Battling in a Titan no longer feels like a next-generation edition of Rock'Em Sock'em Robots, with each mech feeling distinct and powerful in its own right. "We now have six distinct Titans, says Alderman.

"Think of them like *Street Fighter* characters. Purposely designed for certain playstyles but then as soon as you see them, you know how to counter them. Say you come up against a Scorch Titan, well, I can come at that guy with my Ion Titan and I will know its weaknesses. It's very much a chess match more than a guessing game."



RONIN LIGHT

ORDNANCE Arc Wave

Using its deadly mechanical sword, Ronin creates electric waves that damage and slow any enemies unlucky enough to be drawn into a close quarters engagement.

TACTICAL Phase Dash

Avoid incoming fire by using Phase Dash, an ability that allows Ronin to temporarily phase out of the world and quickly close down the distance between you and your enemy.

DEFENSIVE Sword Block

Bringing your sword up across the hull may reduce visibility, but it greatly reduces damage taken too. It can also be held indefinitely as you await backup.

CORE Sword Core

Empowers Ronin's sword attacks, giving the Titan access to an array of new melee abilities. This makes it impossibly dangerous in tight streets.

■ A sword-wielding Titan has been long anticipated and it's great to see it actually make an appearance in the game. Ronin is essentially a hit-and-run specialist, utilising speed and its high power (but low capacity) shotgun to inflict huge damage before making a quick exit. The danger is mitigated somewhat by its flimsy chassis, with Ronin being quickly brought to its knees by any keen Pilot with a steady hand.



SCORCH HEAVY

ORDNANCE Firewall

Powerful and direct, Firewall sends a directed wall of thermite in the enemy's direction. It's deadly to any Titan or Pilot foolish enough to stand in front of it.

TACTICAL Incendiary Trap

These flammable gas canisters steadily leak butane in a small area that can later be triggered by one of your fire attacks for massive damage and a sweet firework show.

DEFENSIVE Thermal Shield

This defensive ability doesn't hold bullets, but instead melts them as they fly towards you. Also does a small amount of AOE damage at close quarters.

CORE Flame Core

Should you charge up your core, Flame Core is essentially an upgraded version of Firewall and destroys anything and everything in its path.

■ Scorch is going to be a favourite, this much we can tell. It's a slow Titan with little defensive capabilities outside of its increased base armour. Scorch has no dash ability, which means you need to commit to a fight if you stray into one, while its single-shot Thermite launcher allows it to do as much damage as possible in the smallest window imaginable.



ION MEDIUM

ORDNANCE Laser Shot

A difficult to aim shoulder-mounted laser, it produces a beam that is best used on Pilots as they leap cautiously from rooftops to rooftop looking for a vantage point.

TACTICAL Tripwire

Laser triggered explosive mines do little damage to enemy Titans, but they do prove useful to Pilots attempting to mount your Titan from ground level.

DEFENSIVE Vortex Shield

Much like the Atlas Titan of old, Vortex Shield is an old favourite that allows you to absorb incoming fire and return it to sender.

CORE Laser Core

Laser Core lets you go full-on Iron Man, unleashing an oversized laser beam directly from your chest cavity. It is both impressive and deadly.

■ Ion feels like the most balanced and familiar of the three new Titans, handling like an upgraded version of the medium Atlas chassis from the first *Titanfall*. Wielding a rapid-fire laser proves to be useful at range and in close quarters, while the returning Vortex Shield means you always have a way to avoid damage if necessary. The Ion Titan is slower than Atlas however, as it is outfitted with just a single dash.

In single-player, Pilots are linked with a Titan and tasked with heading out on covert missions for the Frontier Militia. Your mech is designed to protect you, and the mission, at all costs.



DOES TITANFALL NEED A SINGLE PLAYER CAMPAIGN?

IT IS NO LONGER A MULTIPLAYER GAME FIRST...



Titanfall was always envisioned as a multiplayer-first game, where everything came together between two teams of hyper-agile Pilots and

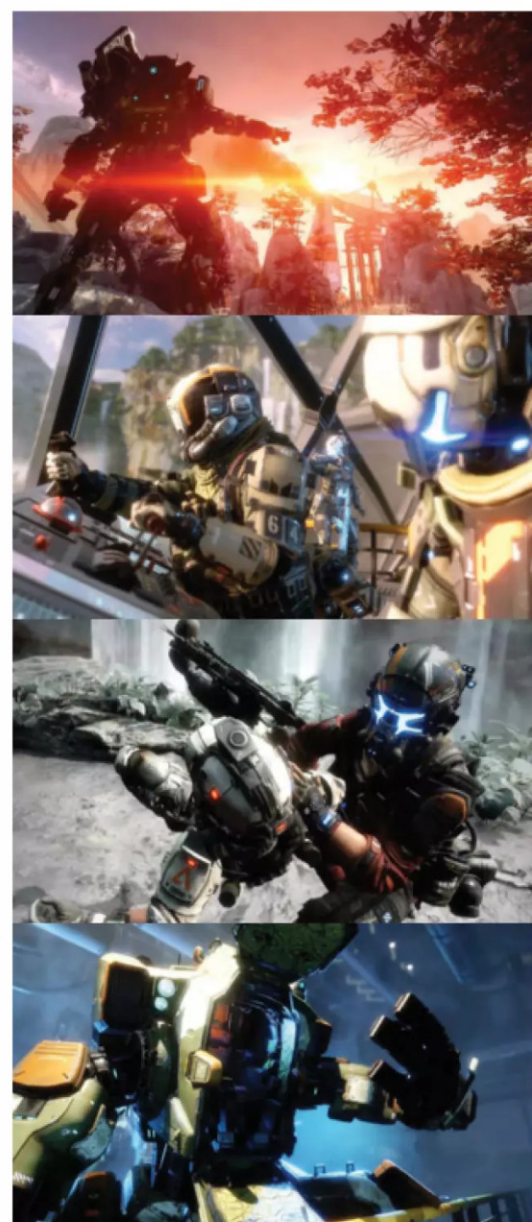
powerhouse mechs. Why then, is Respawn including a fully-formed single-player campaign in the sequel?

It's difficult to see it as anything more than pandering to a certain (vocal) sub-section of the fan base, those who thought that the lack of single-player indicated a lack of value. This was a common misconception back in 2014; that *Titanfall* wasn't worth the money because it had no campaign to rattle through. The market has certainly shifted in the last two years though, thanks in no small part to the success of games like *Overwatch*.

But here we are, with a single-player experience set to explore the unique bond between man and machine. It'll let you step out onto the Frontier as a stranded Militia rifleman, Jack Cooper, caught behind enemy lines with big dreams of becoming an elite Pilot and having a Titan of his own. That'll be BT-7274, a veteran Vanguard class Titan with a voice and personality. After BT's Pilot was killed during mysterious circumstances, the pair team up and battle against IMC forces to complete a mission neither of them should be completing.

It's funny to think that, for a lot of the development team, this will be the first single-player experience the ex-Infinity Ward staffers have worked on since *Modern Warfare 2* in 2009. That shouldn't, of course, inform the likely quality; though the original *Titanfall* made it clear that the team's expertise was to be found in the chaos of online warfare. And so *Titanfall 2*'s single-player will look to bridge the gap between cinematic action-driven experience and the scale of its multiplayer battles; integrating the AI-driven grunts from the online service to ensure the battlegrounds are as vibrant and chaotic as possible.

We've consumed enough science-fiction media to know that the plot is a little by-the-numbers. There's also the inevitable betrayal waiting to happen when dealing with an AI who has been programmed to 'protect the mission' as a priority over protecting its companion, but we're more than happy to give it the benefit of the doubt. While we would gladly have seen *Titanfall 2* release with its focus fully on delivering the best and deepest multiplayer experience possible, we are excited to see how it can flesh out the world and lore. *Titanfall* threw us into gorgeous maps and made us interact with an array of weird and wonderful weapons – we'd be lying if we said we weren't a little interested to learn where they came from.



FINAL IMPRESSIONS

IS IT A CALL OF DUTY KILLER?



Respawn is promising the world with *Titanfall 2* and it may actually deliver. *Titanfall 2* has the potential to change the FPS genre. That isn't wild conjecture either, because the basic game experience is so fluid and fun

that it never fails to hook your attention. Like the original, *Titanfall 2* offers a confident blend of everything the industry has to offer: arena-shooter sensibilities, three-lane map design with a ridiculous focus on verticality, peerless control and mechanics that empower you more than any gun or item every could.

Dancing past gunfire as a Pilot – chaining wall-runs, double-jumps, slides and a grapple out of danger and into a kill – is one of the most satisfying things we have done in a game in 2016. Calling your colossal Titan in from the sky, clambering into its chassis and causing havoc is still monstrously entertaining and, ultimately, both of those sides to the game combine expertly to create something unique. There's still a lot Respawn hasn't shown us – we are yet to see the other Pilot/Titan classes and abilities, and it'll be how these balance among one another that the game will likely succeed or fail come October.

Titanfall 2 is the underdog going into the battle for superiority this Winter season, but there's a part of us that thinks it may have already won. Players the world over know what to expect from *Battlefield* and *Call Of Duty*. Those games iterate – they rarely innovate, not anymore. But *Titanfall 2*, especially for us PS4 owners, is an unknown quantity with a lot of momentum behind it. That'll only grow too, as a multiplayer technical test is planned for later this year. *Titanfall 2* makes a strong first impression, but if it's anything like its predecessor, it'll only go from strength to strength over time.



FREE DLC PLAN

LEARNING FROM PAST MISTAKES

Respawn is listening and learning from the community and reaction to its debut game, but is EA? It's easy to forget that the publisher controls most of the decisions behind pay-walls and pricing – that's one of the reasons we've recently seen Turtle Rock Studios bite back at 2K Games over the state *Evolve* is in. But EA is in the bad books again over *Star Wars Battlefront*; an oppressively expensive and vaguely detailed season pass was not the way we wanted that game to launch.

Thankfully, EA seems to understand that for *Titanfall*, releasing premium map packs splits the community in a way that is often detrimental to the long-term success of a game. Just look at what happened to the original *Titanfall*. It enjoyed huge success at launch, then DLC severed the ties between the dwindling community before everything (including the base game) was eventually and abruptly made free through EA Access in an effort to keep the servers populated. *Titanfall 2* should suffer no such problems with all of its DLC maps and modes to be released free from the get-go.

EXPLORE THE TECH INSIDE

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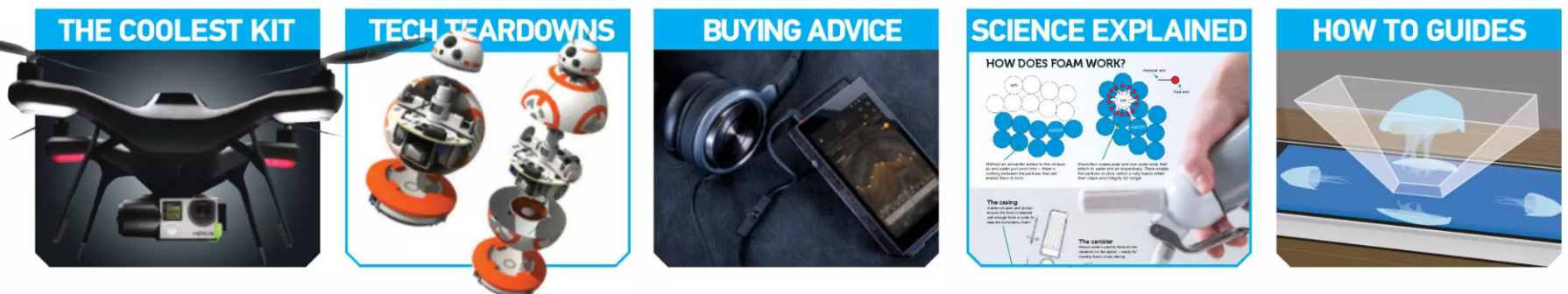


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"We are taking *Call Of Duty* to places fans have never experienced in the series."

HUGE SCALE

Call Of Duty has always been fairly linear – you get an order barked at you, follow along complicity and get the job done. Not so in *Infinite Warfare*. Not only are you leading the charge – with a huge army behind you – but also there's the opportunity to tackle side-quests from the giant battle cruiser you command. This will reveal new combat intel, weapons and items that can assist you down the line.

COMBAT EVOLVED

Call Of Duty has always stuck fairly rigidly to a three-lane design; it's a classic FPS formula that works wonders in both campaign and multiplayer. But with sprawling levels set out in space – with nothing but a booster pack and grappling hook separating you from a long, cold sleep – the levels have become noticeably more interesting. The opportunity to find clever uses of the environment, experiment with cover (and gravity itself) brings new gameplay possibilities to *Call Of Duty* that we've never seen before.



STAR POWER

Infinite Warfare will make use of star talent to help bring a cinematic flair to its single-player campaign, though Activision is really going all out this time. Not only is *Game Of Thrones*' Kit Harington (Jon Snow) "portraying the face of the enemy" but it sounds as if he is being directed by *Lock, Stock* director Guy Ritchie, who has been brought in "assisting in bringing Kit Harington's character to life."

ETA 4 NOVEMBER

DEV INFINITYWARD

PUB ACTIVISION

Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare

A good soldier never gives up



Admit it, you balked at the notion of *Call Of Duty* set in space. You heard that awful cover of David Bowie's *Space Oddity*; saw the action splashed

across the stars and thought it was over. It's okay – we were sort of with you on that front... until we saw it in motion, that is.

Infinity Ward is retuning to the fold in an attempt to make up for past indiscretions; 2013's *Ghosts* wasn't as warmly received as Activision had hoped and attention from fans has only waned in the face of such strong showings from the *Battlefield* and *Titanfall* franchises. But *Infinite Warfare* deserves your time: it's expansive, innovative and impressive in ways we haven't seen demonstrated from the franchise in some time. That all starts with the campaign – as big

and bombastic as ever, though the gameplay looks legitimately fresh, too.

The zero-G gun battles are a delight – ignoring the somewhat shaky application of real-world physics, of course – though the real interest comes from the ability to manoeuvre from ground to ship to space in real-time. Battles are no longer locked to the streets, with many missions giving you the opportunity to clamber into your customisable ship, break orbit and continue the fight in the stars – from the cockpit, in zero-G or from the captain's chair of your own battleship. *Infinite Warfare* is going to be big, and it shouldn't be missed.

CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE is hailing Ground Control from the Infinity Ward space station. More intel: callofduty.com

STRONG BEARD GAME

Not that you can see it from this angle, but Kratos now rocks the mightiest of beards. This will make him 87.3 per cent more effective in dealing with trolls and other Scandinavian threats.

SCARTISSUE

Beneath those arm wraps, you can just make out the scars Kratos bears from having the Blades Of Chaos removed. Dude is basically a walking scar now...



PUT THAT DOWN

Nothing says 'look how powerful I am' quite like using a five-ton pillar instead of a regular weapon. We can't say it seems particularly practical, but it's certainly badass.

ETA 2017 | DEV SANTA MONICA STUDIO | PUB SONY

God Of War

The runes have been cast



Having farmed Greek mythology to extinction, Kratos is ready for a new challenge. While we fully expected this to mean a

change of setting for the next part of the saga, we certainly did not expect it to also burden Kratos with a brand new kind of challenge in parenthood. His son, seen for the first time in the reveal footage, will apparently be by Kratos' side for the duration of this new adventure, Sony's iconic anti-hero forced to find patience and compassion within himself where for the longest time there has been only rage. It's a curious change of direction, sure, but we reckon it's exactly the kind of thing the franchise needed in order to shake things up and make the first original game in the series on PS4 that much more memorable and exciting.

Pulling the camera in closer to the action helps us better see the intricacies of this developing bond, nuances in the beautiful animation brought to the fore in more intimate moments before the camera pulls out to better allow Kratos to be dwarfed by the hulking new foes that walk this snowy land.

Norse mythology is an interesting choice and while it lacks many of the big names and recognisable beasts of its Greek counterpart, you could easily argue that *God Of War* no longer needs familiarity on its side – already cemented as one of Sony's leading exclusive brands, the series could just as easily get away with original stories, characters and monsters these days, although it must be said that its interesting twists on mythological staples have always given the games an excellent hook.

The kid works as a great aid in this regard, Kratos sharing his wisdom and experience with not only his son but also the player – a way of dealing with exposition and exploration of this new mythos and setting with a real narrative reason for doing so. He'll help out in combat and other situations as well (there's an entire button set aside for context-sensitive interaction with the child), but who is he exactly? We have a few ideas already, but we're not convinced that Sony will break its silence much before launch...

GOD OF WAR is being reinvented by those clever people at Santa Monica Studio. Find out more here: sms.playstation.com

ETA 29 SEPTEMBER | PUB EA | DEV EA CANADA

FIFA 17

EA Canada prepares for The Journey



Perhaps the most important thing we could say about the shift from *Ignite* to the *Frostbite* engine for *FIFA 17* is that

it doesn't feel too much different. That might sound like we're damning it or saying that not enough progress has been made, but actually we consider that to be the first major victory for this year's edition. A change in engine can scupper many franchises (*Assassin's Creed Unity* springs to mind) so getting it right before doing it better is the smart move.

And yet with *Frostbite* behind it there are a lot of improvements already. Player models have improved, lighting is superior and we now have a full RPG-style campaign mode called The Journey. We sat down with EA Canada senior producer Nick Channon to learn more.

What does the *Frostbite* engine give you the opportunity to do that *Ignite* didn't previously?

The number one thing is The Journey, the story mode. We just couldn't do narrative. We didn't have the toolset to be able to do it without *Frostbite*. That's allowed us to very much do that. It also allowed us to really look at visuals and take a step back and look at how we're doing things. Obviously we've rewritten and reworked all of those elements to move to *Frostbite*. It's allowed us also to work with other teams like *Battlefield* and the BioWare teams so that we can actually... while we always talked a lot, we can compare notes on the tech that we're in. We can ask, 'how do you do that?' and they can say 'there you go [and show us]'. If you look at the game, we've added more atmospherics. The lighting's a lot different at night. A lot of those elements came from learning from the *Battlefield* team how they created more atmosphere in their levels. I think that's one of the great things not only for this year, but for the future is that this collaboration sets us up very well.

And how long have you been working with *Frostbite*?

Two years... around two years

Is that about the normal amount of time it takes to implement a big new change to *FIFA*?

Yeah, what we do is that we look at a yearly cycle of doing new features. Listen to feedback, what the players like, what they don't like. But obviously at the same time, we're looking at technology changes, at features that maybe take longer than a year. All the physical overhaul we've been working on for nearly three years. All different elements come in at different times.

The game did feel a little more physical to us and perhaps a little slower?

A few people have said that. We haven't slowed the game down. I think that as you add elements to it, the game feels different. We're not done, so there's still tuning and balancing to be done. We're in that stage right now where all the elements are there and now it's fine tuning and looking for exploits, people giving us feedback. 'I scored too many X goals', and so on. That's kind of the phase we're in, so, you know, it can still change.

Is there anything you have learnt from other EA studios that you have been able to implement in *FIFA 17*?

I don't think there's anything unexpected, but we've certainly learnt a lot lighting wise for the game this year and again, looking especially at how the *Battlefield* team create their atmospherics are amazing. How can we bring some of those elements to our game? Very early on when we started on making The Journey, we spoke to BioWare to understand, really get a deep understanding, at how they do story. They're pretty damn good at making story and narrative. What do they do? What

are the processes they use? What are the dos and don'ts? So, those are the kind of things that we've done. I wouldn't say there are any surprises there, but certainly being on the same technology has huge advantages.

Have any new trends in the sport come up that you've had to react to quickly this year?

We're always looking at celebrations and the next kind of cool little thing like that. We look at what people are doing in that sense. We try and bring a fresh flavour to some of those things each year. We're based in Vancouver, the game is actually made out of EA Vancouver, but we're very fortunate that we get every Premier League game. We're always watching games, trying to get inspiration.

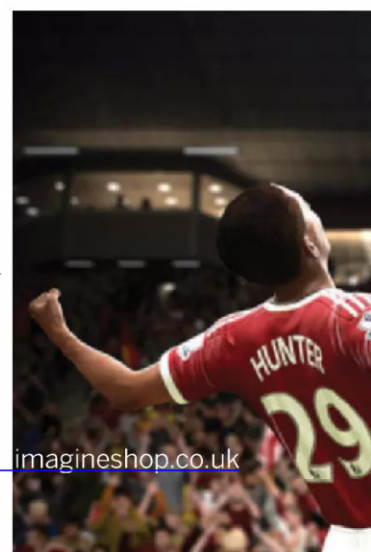
When *FIFA 17* players pick up the controller and start playing, what can they expect that is unique to this game?

I think the first thing they'll notice when they're playing the game is the active intelligence, the attacking movement. It feels very different. It feels like you've got a lot more options. It's pretty cool in the fact that you feel that you can change the way you attack. And then the physical play I think gives a real element using left trigger to really hold people off and stuff.

Is attacking intelligence dictated by player vision, attacking position, or some other internal stats?

We try and make sure there's variety in different teams and this gives us more opportunity to give a little more personality to the players themselves too. I think we want the game to be fun and have those attacking elements, but you should see some differentiation in the game this year.

FIFA 17 is a game about football, like it is every year. If you still feel you need to know more than that, try this: easports.com/fifa





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ As ridiculous as it is, The Journey actually looks kind of interesting.
- ◻ Moving to Frostbite means the game can pick up tricks from DICE and BioWare.
- ✕ Likenesses and visual effects already look way better thanks to the new engine.
- It's FIFA. Either you already buy it every year, or you play PES instead.



△○×□ Will the man do a goal? What if he doesn't? Will he do a cry instead? These answers and many more coming in a month.



ETA 28 OCTOBER | PUB SONY | DEV GENDESIGN/JAPAN STUDIO

The Last Guardian

We're in this together



We're not sure that *The Last Guardian* is going to be changing anyone's life when it finally lands later

this year. We point this out only to stamp down any cumulative expectations you might have about this game, not to denigrate it. Nearly ten years in gestation has meant Fumito Ueda's follow-up to *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus* has gathered up and retained a lot of high hopes. In the end, its greatest sin may be simply that it's a game after all.

So, if we can put aside hype and overblown expectation for a moment and look at *The Last Guardian* with as little baggage as possible, what do we have? A relatively small, contained and potentially beguiling tale of a young boy and large creature hoping to work together, despite a communication barrier, to find freedom. And that's never really changed after all these years. Here are some other key points you need to keep in mind.

While you'll spend most of the game not being able to communicate with Trico verbally, *The Last Guardian* will begin with a voice-over from the boy when he is much older, tipping the game's hat a little as to his ultimate fate. This means for the first time in a Team Ico game, there will be exposition and specifically stated narrative to build some of your own theories upon. As we understand it, this won't be through the whole game, so there will still be plenty of room for you to provide your own conclusions and theories.

As you might expect there are plenty of connections between this game and Ueda's previous titles. Small visual elements, like the black dust-like clouds of *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus* appearing around Trico at times, make an appearance. There's also some of the style of the game with its misty draw distances and subtle animations. The boy will stumble on uneven ground and sometimes lose his footing. He's not a seasoned or experienced climber or anything,

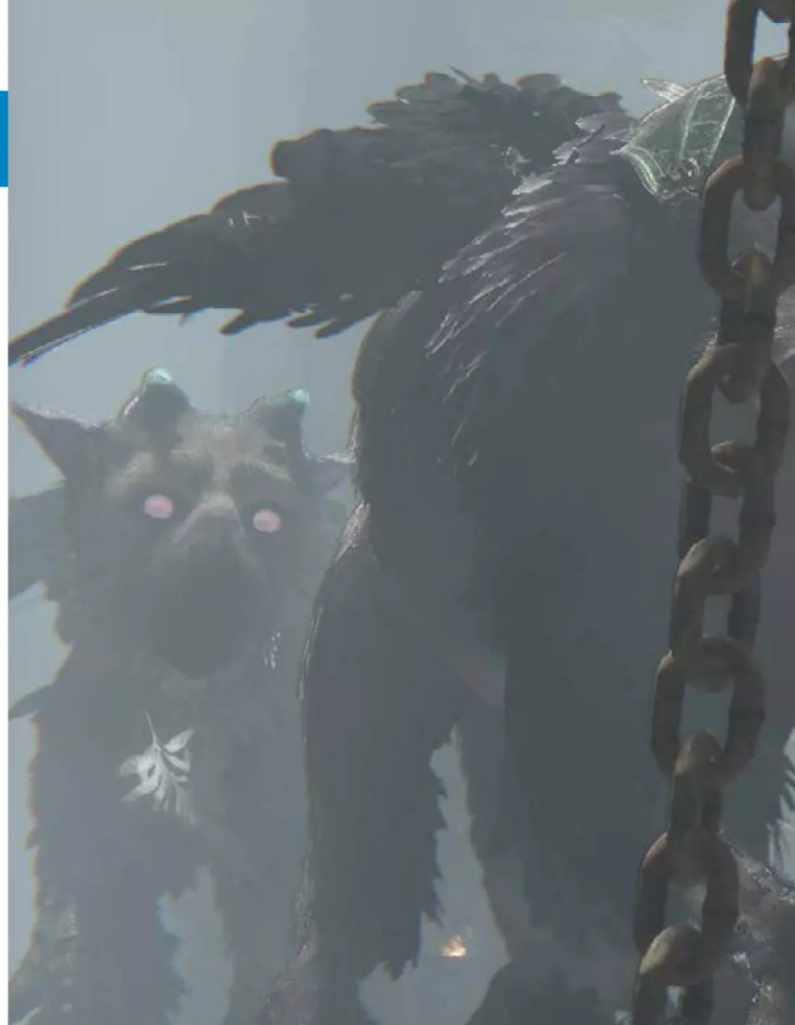
so he makes mistakes, just as we've seen in the PS2 titles.

Ueda has been stressing that the genDesign and Japan Studio teams are not looking to push the PS4 hardware all that hard. Graphical excellence is important, but generation-defining visuals are not the primary concern of the team. It has been investing its time in animating Trico and the boy and working on facial animations to make sure you can read as much from Trico's face as possible in defining its moods. Some have compared *The Last Guardian* favourably with the PS4 version of *The Last Of Us*. So, nice enough to look at, then, but more stylised than realistic.

So far our exposure to Trico has shown it to be a very individualistic and self-motivated creature. You can't treat it as you pet or really order it around when you first start working together and it may even strike out at you. Early gameplay demos have revealed that there is hidden power beneath Trico's adorable exterior. For instance, you can use mirrors to cause a beam of energy to fire from its tail. Is this some kind of trained response that Trico has been trained to follow and what does it mean for the trust between the two primary characters?

Up until fairly recently we had assumed Trico might be the last of its kind or in some way separated from others in its species, much as the boy has been, however new images suggest otherwise. The appearance of a second creature with its eyes glowing in anger (something Trico does too) gives more weight to the idea that these animals may be used as weapons, trained to destroy an unknown enemy. Very little has been said about this so far by the team, so we will have to wait for the game to discover more.

THE LAST GUARDIAN is a real thing that actually exists. Seriously, it's got a website and everything! See? It's right here: bit.ly/29oJimu



AOX The depth of Trico's learning will be crucial – if it's Telltale shallow and obvious, the whole game could fall flat.



△○×□ It's come a long way visually from its days as a PS3 game, but it still doesn't feel like a true, made-for-PS4 piece of software like something like *The Order* or *Uncharted 4*. Probably because it pretty much isn't, but the art style should help save it – the painterly style and lavish world and character design stand to cover up for most technical shortcomings.



THE PREMISE IS PRETTY UNORIGINAL, REALLY

DAYS GONE LOOKS like a lot of things. Ultimately, this does it a disservice, but it's easy to draw comparisons – it looks a little like a spin-off from *The Last Of Us* in motion. On paper, its plot – an 'event' ravaged the world two years prior to the game that turns most of the population into Freakers, leaving the survivors to operate as gangs – is a pretty hackneyed combination of *The Walking Dead* and *Sons Of Anarchy*. We're all a bit bored of zombies; thankfully, the execution of the game's mechanics and systems make up for any thematic shortcomings.

ETA TBC | PUB SONY | DEV BEND STUDIO

Days Gone

Long days ahead on the broken road



Days Gone is quite the stunning return for Bend.

This is a PlayStation 4 exclusive that demonstrates just how powerful the console is, putting

former bounty hunter Deacon St John (played by *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*'s Starkiller actor, Sam Witwer) in the middle of a huge, open world post-apocalypse event the likes of which we've never seen in gaming. The world is sprawling and gorgeous, the numbers of enemies on screen at any one time quite honestly staggering, and the combat intuitive and stressful; even if you're bored of zombie games, *Days Gone* is doing just about enough to renew interest. While it's a fair way off from release, *Days Gone* has immediately established itself as one of the most impressive games in the pipeline, an engaging new action adventure that's looking to push convention through its systems and expand the notion of emergent gameplay in an open-world setting.

DAYS GONE is looking to see in the end of the world in style – bikers versus zombies, to be precise. Find out more here: bendstudio.com

THERE IS NO RELEASE DATE IN SIGHT JUST YET

WERE YOU TO judge *Days Gone* on what has been shown publicly, perhaps you'd believe a release date was in sight – that ten-minute demo seemed more polished than a lot of final releases. While the game has been in production for more than three years, it's still in early development. Bend has finalised the mechanics, themes and ideas behind the game, but this is where the hard work begins. The demo shows promise, but now the pressure is on Bend – and its first console game in over a decade – to actually deliver.

IT FEATURES A HUGE OPEN WORLD

DAYS GONE FEATURES an enormous environment. While there will be a critical path and story missions, there's also a big focus on discovering new outposts and scavenging resources. This is integral for progression and survival, with the weapon crafting system designed to make you feel like a modern-day MacGyver, where you're forced to find clever solutions with the limited tools in front of you to tackle the ridiculous amount of enemies. Be wary of the environment and the ways you can use it to your advantage, or risk being torn apart by huge groups of zombies.

YOUR BIKE IS YOUR BEST BUDDY

IN DAYS GONE, you aren't riding the open road, you're riding the broken road – all of the roads are beset by roadblocks and carnage and zombies. Anyway, all these broken roads mean a lot of off-road riding, which you'll do with your heavily customised Drifter bike. It's a grounded item in the world, meaning you'll need to know where it is at all times to survive – ditching it to escape Freakers on foot could cause more trouble in the long run, especially as its saddle bags hold your entire inventory.

IN THE DISTANCE

Play areas feel significantly larger than in the original – not overly surprising given that was only on Vita, but it will mean a great focus on exploration and freedom.

ETA 2016 | PUB SONY | DEV JAPAN STUDIO

Gravity Rush 2

Falling with style



As good as the first *Gravity Rush* was, not a lot of people played it. Reasons

for this are numerous – it was a Vita exclusive (few combinations of words strike more fear into the hearts of modern publishers) that used motion controls (which always work well, right?) with an unique art style and physics-defying mechanics that were obtuse and awkward at times. Not the best of combinations for a new first-party title looking to break into the market, we're sure you'll agree, but numbers aside, the developer managed to make it work. Somehow.

It isn't just the game's fans that believe that, either. Sony itself clearly has faith in the brand and while this sequel was originally pegged to follow its predecessor and tumble onto Vita, the decision was made to leave the portable market behind and focus on the biggest home console around right now instead. After all, if this series can't succeed even with such a strong and receptive user base, maybe there is no hope for it commercially after all. A sad thought, sure, but something we're glad to see Sony putting to the test rather than simply assuming it to be true.

Mechanically, it's harder to explain how *Gravity Rush* handles than it is to actually play it. By hovering and shifting gravity as you see fit, you can effectively soar all over the beautiful floating cities once you get your head around the initially cumbersome controls. The Vita original had an issue where gyro controls would sometimes attempt to override your precise analog stick inputs, so hopefully similar motion controls in this sequel are optional – the system worked well in isolation, to be fair, just not when you already had the perfect trajectory lined up and a slight nudge sent you careening off in the wrong direction.

With little in the way of major competition, *Gravity Rush 2* has accidentally wound up as one of Sony's main first-party titles this holiday season and while that's a dangerous time for something as low-key as this to be hanging around – triple-A juggernauts are *everywhere* that time of year – it's certainly something different to everything else around during that period. Here's hoping timing isn't the final nail in the coffin for Kat's franchise...

GRAVITY RUSH 2 is one of Sony's quirkiest in-house productions... well, since *Patapon*, anyway. More here: playstation.com

TOPSYTURVY

It's not often that the world is the right way up, so make the most of normality whenever you have the chance. Things can get pretty trippy once you master flight...

GRAVITY CRUSH

Kat appears to have a better handle on her powers this time, now able to alter not only direction but also force of gravity for speed and power boosts.

SPACE CAT

Do you like cats? Do you like space? Then you'll love SpaceCat! Its name is Dusty and it's the source of Kat's gravity manipulation powers. Obviously.

BANTER-RANG

■ MUCH LIKE MORTAL

Kombat X, characters will enter the stage with a few sharp barbs just to get things going. These contextual conversations mean that you'll get a little more story and insight into the relationship between fighters before they begin firing energy bolts and throwing fists into at each others' faces. Adversaries and friends also appear to have special dialogue, too.

ETA 2017 | DEV NETHERREALM STUDIOS | PUB WARNER BROS.

Injustice 2

The gods just got a little nastier



Having done great things with *Mortal Kombat X*, NetherRealm appears to be attempting something similar with this most

unlikely of fighting series. *Injustice: Gods Among Us* managed to pull off the bizarre concept of a fighter that involved Superman where he wasn't guaranteed to win. *Injustice 2* is building on that with greater depth, more freedom and a truck-load of new characters.

The reason it worked the first time around though was because it was a lot of fun. It had narrative reasons to justify the conflict between Justice League heroes, but all that really mattered was that every signature move and ability was squeezed into the game. That's

true of *Injustice 2* as well, only this time with even better graphics and some stunning new stage effects.

Environmental attacks and specials make a return of course, but we were very impressed with some of the contextual background effects in this game. For instance, fighting outside Gotham's famous Empire Theatre will eventually see spotlights focused on the combating duo. It's a simple little touch, but a sign of the level of detail NetherRealm is adding into this experience, really immersing itself in the DC lore and the worlds it inhabits.

INJUSTICE 2 is the result of NetherRealm finally learn how to spell the word 'combat'. Go congratulate the team at injustice.com





GEARING UP

■ **AS YOU PLAY** through the story mode or online, you will unlock costume items and equipment specific to each character. These items will have effects on abilities, increasing strength, speed, defence, health and offering new moves. It also allows you to customise the look of each character, within limits of what each might wear. No top hats for Batman, unfortunately...

ROSTER RUMOURS

■ **SO FAR THE** playable characters revealed have been Batman, Superman, Supergirl, Aquaman, Atrocitus, Wonder Woman, Blue Beetle and Gorilla Grodd. However, there are 28 characters believed to be coming at launch, and an ESL freebie may reveal a few more – logos and iconography for Harley Quinn, Captain Cold, Green Lantern and Doctor Fate all appear on the shirt.

ETA SEPTEMBER | PUB ACTIVISION | DEV BUNGIE

Destiny: Rise Of Iron

Every rose has its Thorn



The life of a Guardian is a hard, cruel one. Just when you think you're done with *Destiny* and can move onto playing something else, Bungie

goes and adds a bunch of new content and drags you kicking and screaming back to the Tower. It doesn't help that expansion quality has been on a steady upward trajectory since launch – *The Dark Below* was a bit of a weak start but by the time we get to *The Taken King*, the game's core systems and mechanics are as good as – if not better than – they've ever been.

Looking to continue this run of improvements, *Rise Of Iron* is set to make some pretty major changes to the *Destiny* scene. For one thing, there won't be a PS3 version. The game as it stands today is the game last-gen *Destiny* will always be (well, until the plugs are pulled on the servers, at least), while ongoing support shifts to current-gen machines exclusively. It'll disappoint some players, of course, but it's for the best in the long run – focusing on PS4 will allow things to look better, run smoother and communicate more efficiently down the line, as we head towards the inevitable 'proper sequel' in the near future.

So what's new? Well, there's all the usual expansion stuff for a start – increased Light level cap (raised to 400 via endgame gear), loads of new weapons and armour, additional story missions, new Exotics and so on. In addition, there'll be a whole new area to explore (hopefully packed with as many awesome secrets as the Dreadnaught), new enemies in the SIVA-enhanced Splicers (basically Fallen who are deep into body-modding) and, best of all, a new Raid we can lose hours to in the company of surprisingly patient allies. Given how good King's Fall was, we can't wait to get our Raid on again...

DESTINY: RISE OF IRON is being buffed to a shine by Bungie. See it shimmer with your own two eyes on the official site: bungie.net

BALANCING ACT

Major patches also tend to bring with them fairly major balance patches that seriously shake up the meta. Will Hand Cannons rule again, or are ARs here to stay?

SHINY NEW TOYS

With the friendly infusion system these days, every new weapon you find can be useful. *Destiny's* already great selection of guns is about to get even better...





VANITY FAIR

You no longer have to worry about needing to actually wear Raid gear to hit max Light, thanks to infusion. If you don't like the new sets, stick with your old stuff!

FANCY BOOTIES

Warlocks, rejoice – your time as the only class without access to Exotic footwear is almost at an end! Let's hope Bungie actually makes them viable, though...

THE LAST GUARDIAN

STILL HYPED AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?



twitter

twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

Don't do anything to the Last Guardian release date. Give us one thing.

@87TH

The last Guardian coming out on ps4 in October that month is going to be a sofa and lager and crips month haha ;-)

@SILENT236

the last guardian premium edition is so expensive but that steelbook case is CALLING MY NAME

@WISHLESS

Almost unbelievable that FF15 and The Last Guardian are being released this year. Been waiting for so long.

@DJ_LINK

Called it before and I'm still gonna call it now: I bet 'The Last Guardian' is referring to the kid, not the giant bat, dog, hyena thing.

@DAPP3RDRAGON

P5, GOW4, For Honour, The Last Guardian, FFXV are the only games I'm really hyped for.

@BRAVEVESPERIA94

i can't believe final fantasy xv and the last guardian are coming out this year. like remember when we thought those games were dead?

@TALIA_TATE

october's so close i want to play the last guardian already tbh

@CHEEZZLYKUMA

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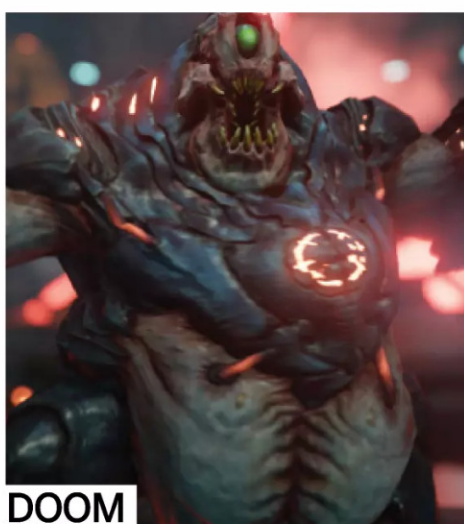


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★★★★★ TEN OF THE BEST ★★★★★ 4-LETTER GAMES

WHO NEEDS LONG TITLES WHEN SHORT ONES GET THE JOB DONE QUICKER?



DOOM

■ **FIRST MENTION OBVIOUSLY** has to go to the classic id FPS, since it's the only game that could be included on this list twice – once for the 1991 original and again for this year's outstanding reboot. It's the perfect title for the series, implying the horrors you're letting yourself in for by playing without giving anything away and we're delighted to see the franchise still going strong today.



XCOM

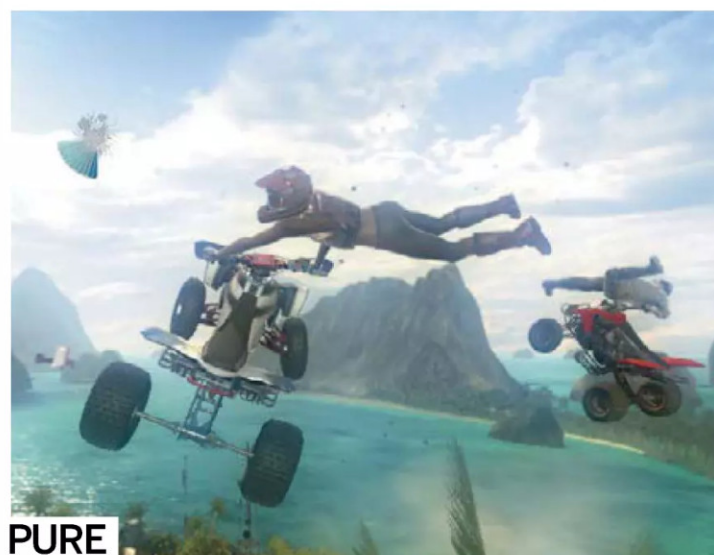
■ **YES, WE KNOW** it should technically have a subtitle, but it doesn't matter – the legendary sci-fi strategy deserves a place on this list and you know it. Playing an *XCOM* game is a love/hate relationship, bonds forged between commander and specialists as they come home victorious just as easily shattered by an unlikely end at the hands of a stray critical from the other side of the map. Just assume you'll miss every shot – it makes all those 99% warning shots hurt a little less.



NIER

■ **YOU COULD CALL** *Nier* a lot of things – creative, janky, beautiful, ugly, schizophrenic, artistic, haunting – but 'average' is not a word you'll ever hear used to describe this unique RPG adventure. Ironical really, since it met with

a lot of decidedly average scores at launch, primarily because it's so hard to nail down what *Nier* actually is. With so many smart genre shifts mid-game and some incredibly imaginative moments, we can't wait for the sequel.



PURE

■ **LOOK BACK AT** the PS2's catalogue of games and we guarantee you'll find a staggering amount of motocross and ATV games – they were *everywhere* back then, and most of them weren't very good. That's largely why *Pure* came as such a nice surprise, though the entertaining arcade racer was sadly the studio's penultimate game before closure.

FLOW

■ **IT'S NOT EXACTLY** easy to find the right words to describe something so curious as *flow*. It's an evolution sim of sorts, your segmented worm-like creature growing larger as you munch on smaller critters until eventually, you're large enough to start throwing your weight around with more aggressive life forms. It's generally quite a serene experience (hardly surprising, given that it's by the same team as *Flower* and *Journey*), although seeing hostile creatures stirring in the depths below you can prove somewhat less relaxing.



FURI

■ **THIS STYLISH INDIE** action game might still be fresh on your mind if you grabbed it as part of the recent PS Plus offering, and hopefully you enjoyed it as much as we did. Though the forced walking section drag on a bit and the painterly art style may not be to everyone's tastes, the meat of the game – its superb combat system – is strong enough to carry the whole experience. Even if it wasn't, the team was smart enough to include a fail-safe – the eclectic electro soundtrack is one of the best of the generation so far and worth checking out even if you have no interest in the game.



SOMA

■ **HORROR GAMES TEND** to get a bit of a bad rap these days, largely because the most exposure many of them get is from having attention-seeking YouTube cretins scream over them. But this isn't like *Five Nights At Freddy's* or any of that jump-scare-heavy Let's Play fuel – *SOMA* is smarter and more creative than that, as the developer's pedigree with the *Amnesia* games should make clear. It's more a slightly scary walking simulator than a horror game, in truth. Narrative is an important aspect and while there are some grim moments, they're not exactly the focal points.



BLUR

■ **BIZARRE CREATIONS ALWAYS** had a knack for doing interesting and original things within otherwise traditional racers, though this would be the studio's most outlandish experiment. Effectively *Mario Kart* played out in real cars around real cities, it's as much about shunting and blasting the opposition into submission as it is reaching the finish line ahead of them. In terms of combat racing, only *Burnout* has done it better on PlayStation.



RUSE

■ **UBISOFT DIDN'T ALWAYS** make games where you capture outposts and climb things to highlight trinkets on a map, you know. Back in 2010, it released this ingenious World War II strategy title where the emphasis was on information warfare rather than full-scale assaults. Feeding enemy forces fake intel can see them split their forces and make room for a big push, while decoy units may distract them while your real force mobilises elsewhere.



FEAR

■ **WHILE THE SERIES** might have fallen to pieces fairly quickly – shaken apart by its own success and rapid expansion, most likely – the original game is one we still look back on fondly. Blending popular military FPS mechanics with supernatural elements and psychological horror was a bold move but it paid off, allowing *FEAR* to truly stand out from the crowd and offer something original. The PS3 port was far from perfect, but it was better than nothing.

20 BIGGEST BREAKOUT GAMES

MEET THE GAMES AND
EXPERIENCES THAT CAME
OUT OF NOWHERE TO
CHANGE THE GAMING
LANDSCAPE FOREVER...

01



FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Designed by indie developer Scott Cawthon and released in 2014, *Five Nights At Freddy's* was a relatively unassuming point-and-click horror experience for PC. It was a simplified take on the genre, which helped it reach a wider audience than might have been expected.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Thanks to the number of jump scares it managed to pack in, *Five Nights At Freddy's* has become a Let's Play favourite for YouTubers and Twitch streamers. As of July 2015 it was estimated it was being downloaded 4,694 times a day. Since its release, it has already spawned three direct sequels and two spin-off games.

02



GUITAR HERO

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Developer Harmonix made a name for itself with the superb traditional rhythm action duo of *FreQuency* and *Amplitude*, using this moderate success as a platform from which to announce *Guitar Hero*, a rock-based sequel with a plastic guitar controller.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ While not the first game with an axe to grind (that would be Konami's *Guitar Freaks*), *Guitar Hero's* superb soundtrack and engrossing rock star fantasy captured the imaginations of players everywhere. The band broke up shortly after – *Guitar Hero II* was Harmonix's last gig before Activision put Neversoft on the stage, while the original lineup took its concept to the next level with the *Rock Band* series.



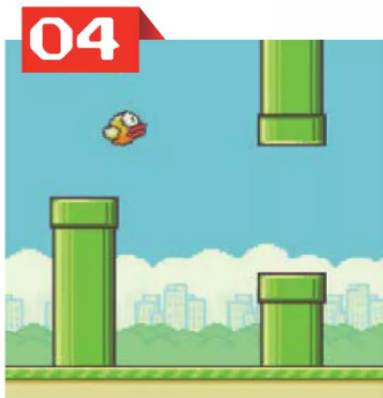
CANDY CRUSH SAGA

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ The mobile market is notoriously volatile and hard to predict, so while King's match-three puzzle game might not be very good, it happened to be in the right place at the right time – namely to catch players as they fell out of love with previous mobile sensation, *Angry Birds*.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ It turned social gaming company King into a household name almost overnight – six months after the game's Facebook launch in early 2012, the mobile version attracted 10 million users in its first month, and King has launched 13 other games since. It must be doing something right – King was bought by Activision earlier this year for almost \$6 billion.



FLAPPY BIRD

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Quite why *Flappy Bird* took off some six months after a muted launch remains a mystery, but take off it did – it exploded in January 2014 to be the most downloaded game on the App Store that month, reportedly pulling in \$50,000 a day in advertising revenue.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ The game itself was pulled by its creator the month after its instant success, with the amusing side effect that prices of phones with the game installed saw a brief spike in value. Countless copycats rushed to fill the gap, and the game could also be seen to have popularised the nauseating 'Verby Noun' titling convention that all modern mobile games apparently must follow.



MINECRAFT

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Notch's simplistic survival game started out fairly innocuously, although it didn't take long for skilled creators to start showing off their masterpieces. Inspired by these miracles of craftsmanship, the user base snowballed in a matter of months – it broke 1 million users in under a month while it was still in beta.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Well, a blocky indie game is now one of the most successful titles in recent memory, with more than 100 million copies sold across 14 platforms. It is even used in schools as an educational tool – kids and adults alike can't seem to get enough.



ANGRY BIRDS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Building on the simple physics-based action of Flash games like *Crush The Castle*, *Angry Birds* hit iOS in late 2009, and while not the overnight success story of some of these examples, it enjoyed a steady rise to power.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ 2010 was the game's year, with the game spending the majority of it riding high at the top of the iOS charts. It has since spawned 12 sequels, three spin-offs and even a Hollywood movie... which apparently isn't as awful as you'd imagine. With more than 3 billion total downloads, it's the most successful freemium series ever.



BRAIN TRAINING

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Dr. Kawashima's *Brain Training* was such a curve ball that Japanese retailers were reportedly quite reluctant in adopting the 'educational' game at first. They sure were glad that they did in the end, though.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ *Brain Training* was integral in turning the DS from a plaything for children to a device that offers something for players of all ages. With the game selling over 19 million copies, other pseudoscientific games popped up in its wake, as well as a slew of simple and traditional titles designed to appeal to the newly captured older demographic.



JUST DANCE

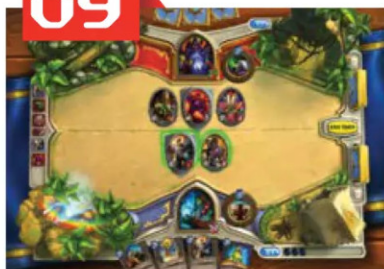
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Following the roaring success of rhythm-action games such as *Guitar Hero* and *SingStar*, Ubisoft leapt into the fray with its own dance-focused contribution to the genre. It had stiff competition from Harmonix's *Dance Central*, however.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Aided in large part to branching out as a multi-format game as the years went by, *Just Dance* went from a fairly poorly received Wii game to being one of the longest-lasting rhythm-action games from this period. In fact, it's still alive and dancing today, which given that it only tracks one hand of the player is pretty staggering.

09



HEARTHSTONE

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Digital card games have been around for years, so it's not as though *Hearthstone* was particularly original. Making the genre cool and accessible, though? Now *that* would take some doing on Blizzard's part.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Card gaming is a difficult sector to break into, one that's been held down by *Magic The Gathering*, *Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *Pokémon* for years. Unfazed, Blizzard waltzed onto the battleground and Pyroblasted the big boys with *Hearthstone's* simple mechanics, popular *Warcraft* characters and a slick presentation. The game now exceeds 50 million registered players.

10



DRAW SOMETHING

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ OMGPop's mobile *Pictionary* wannabe *Draw Something* followed the classic mobile success trajectory – launch, get featured, go viral, burn out, fade away. Still, it was fun while it lasted.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Facebook integration was the masterstroke here, making starting new games with distant friends as easy as tapping their picture. The craze didn't last long at all, but it was enough for the developer to be bought up by Zynga for \$180 million. Sequels and updates are still coming out, if you still care.

11



SKYLANDERS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ The PlayStation trilogy cemented Spyro as one of the great video game heroes of the generation, although this legacy was besmirched by the slew of mediocre sequels that followed on later platforms and it looked like the dragon was extinct.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ In one of the most inventive comebacks in gaming history, Spyro was reinvented to be the frontman of new toys-to-life brand *Skylanders*. Few could have predicted the monster this formula would spawn, with over 250 million toys sold to date, the series racking up over \$3 billion in sales and major players like Disney and Lego jumping on the hugely successful model.

12



STREET FIGHTER II

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ In 1987, Capcom released an unknown fighting game with awkward special moves and pressure-sensitive buttons that determined hit power. It was pretty bad. Then, a sequel came along in 1991... and it was sort of the best thing ever.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ *Street Fighter II* basically established the template for the modern fighting game, in the process becoming one of Capcom's most successful titles and one of the most iconic arcade games of all time. Play the original today and it's difficult to believe that the two are even related.

13



NINTENDOGS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Any game being codeveloped by *Earthbound* designer Shigesato Itoi, *Pokémon* designer Tsunekazu Ishihara and Shigeru Miyamoto was likely to draw attention, but a dog-focused pet simulator? Originally conceived for N64 and even migrated to GameCube, it finally landed on the Nintendo DS in 2005.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ While the real-time clock of the home consoles had originally helped make this sim tick in development (similar to *Animal Crossing*), it was the touch interface of the Nintendo DS that turned *Nintendogs* into a world beater. Casual players couldn't get enough of the cute puppies they could play with.

14



THE SIMS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ If you ever zoomed all the way in during a game of *Sim City* and wondered what the residents of your expertly run metropolis were doing in their homes, *The Sims* was a game designed with you in mind.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Sim games always had their own niche but by pulling right in on a customisable family and making everything much more personal, Maxis was able to break out of that box and reach a wider player base than EA ever could have expected. The series smashed records, though, now sitting at over 175 million copies sold.



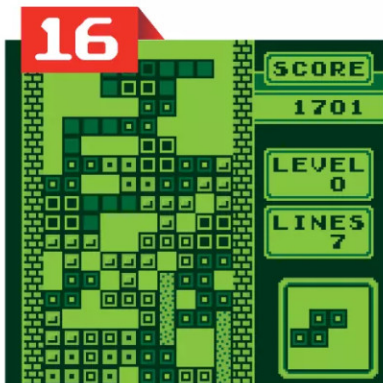
THE SOULS SERIES

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ FromSoftware used to be one of the most erratic developers in the business, veering wildly from the solid mech shooting action of *Armored Core* to awful RPGs like *Enchanted Arms*. Then, a single game changed the firm's fortunes.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ *Demon's Souls* released to an incredible response, with follow-up *Dark Souls* honing the hardcore action-RPG formula and going multiplatform to reach a wider audience. There's no question mark hanging over From's abilities any more, and that's all because of the *Souls* games.



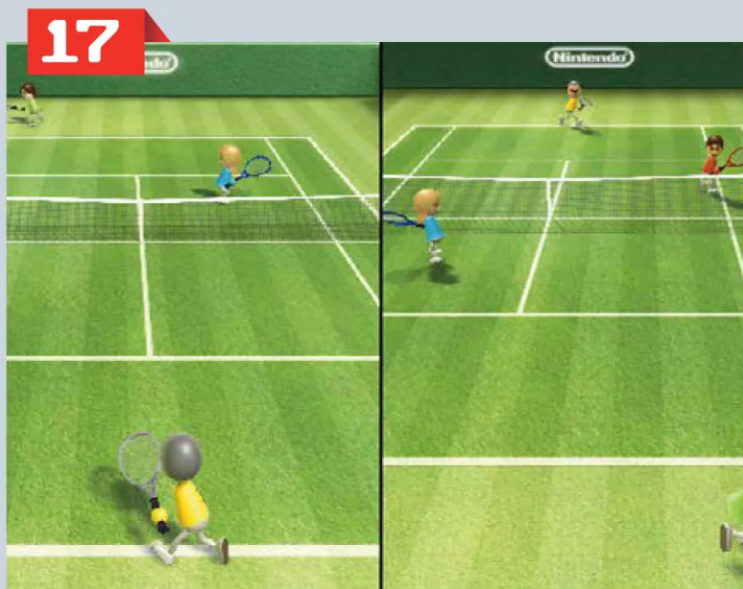
TETRIS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Bundling a simple puzzle game with the Game Boy was a smart move, giving buyers something to play without having to pick up additional software. But whether through chance or design, that puzzle game happened to be one of the greatest of all time.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Game Boy and *Tetris* was a symbiotic relationship, the system inherently boosting sales of the pack-in game and the game boosting sales of the hardware. Given the success of the handheld, it should come as no surprise that *Tetris* did 35 million on Game Boy alone, rising to a staggering 500 million when you factor in every different version over the years.



WII SPORTS

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ A pack-in game should highlight the strengths of the system it comes with, and few have done this better than *Wii Sports*. Many Wii consoles were sold purely on the strength of this accessible motion-controlled sports compilation, and its impact was felt on a much wider scale.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Wii's universal appeal made it a huge success (the console, while less powerful than the competition, shifted 100 million units) and everyone from consumers to rivals wanted a piece of the action... hence Sony's Move controller and Microsoft's Kinect targeting the same broad market.



THE MOBA GENRE

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ In 2003, a *Warcraft III* player by the name of Eul created a mod for the game where multiple heroes do battle on a single map. Others built upon and expanded the concept over time, as it steadily grew in popularity.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Seeing the potential in the mod, Riot Games created a game of its own in the same vein – *League Of Legends* launched in 2009, quickly building a gigantic player base while Valve picked up the Dota name to create its own sequel. *LoL* and *Dota 2* are today two of the biggest games around, with over 100 million monthly players between them and tournament prize pools regularly exceeding \$1 million.



COUNTER-STRIKE

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Originally developed as a mod of *Half-Life* by two fans of the game, Minh Le and Jess Cliffe, the IP for the project was bought by Valve itself and turned into an official release for the FPS. It turned the sci-fi shooter into a gritty, counter-terrorist FPS experience.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ In an age where mods of triple-A shooters are more likely to be met by cease-and-desist orders than job offers, it's hard to imagine a game like this emerging from a popular FPS to spin out into its own franchise. *Counter-Strike* in its modern iteration is consistently one of the most-played titles in its genre.



FARMVILLE

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?:

■ Facebook games were just hitting their stride in 2009 when Zynga's *FarmVille* arrived on the scene, and it promptly held the top spot in most-played FB games for a solid two years.

WHAT DID IT ACHIEVE?:

■ Its design straddled the ingenious and the obnoxious, slowing progress to a crawl unless you pay real money or invite friends to come help you, effectively advertising the game for the team while filling inboxes with annoying requests. *FarmVille*'s popularity isn't what it used to be (even the sequel didn't really win back lapsed Facebook farmers), but its template and legacy live on regardless.

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EDITOR'S
PICK

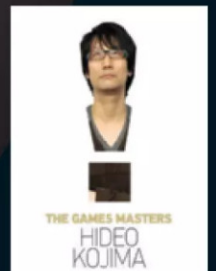
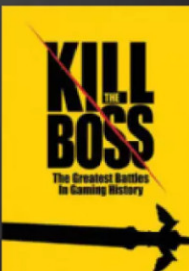
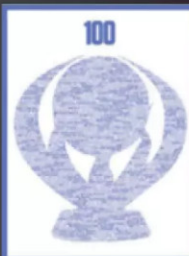
Worst Ways To Die
In Videogaming



Warning: Graphic Content

PlayStation 4
Directory

Your guide to the best games available for PS4



ALL AVAILABLE TODAY ON
GREATDIGITALMAGS.COM

ΔOXD The final showdown is one of the worst we've encountered, somewhat at odds with the movie's exciting climax.

"UNLESS YOU'RE MESSING ABOUT WITH A FRIEND OR GUIDING A YOUNGLING THROUGH THE GAME, IT CAN OFTEN FEEL TEDIOUS"



Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens

It's a trap!



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Warner Bros.
DEVELOPER
TT Fusion
PSN PRICE
£39.99
PLAYERS
1-2



If there's one element from the source material this latest addition to the ever-growing Lego family absolutely nails, it's the ability to create a new product without doing anything vaguely original – much as Abrams' movie was more or less a beat-for-beat retread of *A New Hope*, so too does TT Fusion's take on it raid the archives for gameplay elements used in previous games. That's not exactly anything new for Lego games, given that the template has changed little in over a decade, but it's exacerbated by the fact that this is one movie's worth of content stretched out to fill the space usually used for three or more films.

To its credit, the team has pulled in a few elements from elsewhere in gaming that are new to the series, but again, when everything is stretched so thin that there's an entire mission based around refuelling the Millennium Falcon, even these can't really save the game from feeling more like a trudge through the events of the movie than a celebration of its clear highlights.

Ahead of launch, much was made of the fact that the additional levels would give us a little more insight into the characters and their back stories, although the reality is a little less exciting. One or two are decent (the first, in which Poe rescues Ackbar, is by far the best of the lot) but the rest just feel like playable trimmings from the cutting room floor of the movie, needless and fruitless exposition in a game that already feels padded.

While a novel feature in theory, multi-build – whereby certain piles of bricks can be assembled into several different creations – again just feels like another way to pad things out. More often than not, it's a simple case of building each one in the right order, smashing and rebuilding accordingly while later also dealing with a time limit, because those always make things more fun – even

those sections where one build could lead to a secret or collectable fall down on account of the structure previews not being clear, plus some even disappear if you happen to make the thing that would cause you to progress first, which is frustrating. Hub areas tend to fare much better, with their many brief missions and tasks far more varied and playful, to be enjoyed at your own pace and with more frequent rewards.

Not every addition falls quite so flat, however, and simple as they may be, blaster battles are a great way to capture the excitement of equivalent sequences in the movies. It's little more than My First Cover Shooter, sure, but it works well enough – TPS pros might need to rein in their habits (basic collision geometry means you can't snipe through small gaps in cover or hit enemies or weak points the game would rather you didn't until later) but with snap-to-target and evolving set pieces that anyone can blast their way through, they're certainly serviceable for a family game such as this. Similarly, returning dogfight sections are simple and effective *Star Fox*-esque aerial battles that don't need complex mechanics to be engrossing, and that do a cracking job of breaking up the usual Lego template of basic combat and light puzzle-solving as you switch between multiple characters. The latter has always been pretty straightforward but here, the majority are absolutely trivialised by having characters call out suggestions or solutions the second the task is revealed – it'll prevent kids from ever getting stuck but it's all kinds of patronising for older players.

Mechanically, it plays almost exactly as you expect/remember (who *hasn't* played a Lego game at this point?) with the usual mammoth cast of characters to unlock, Gold Bricks to collect, Minikits to assemble and cheats to play around with. It does feel easier than previous games – somehow – and between the Red Bricks that unlock useful cheats being significantly easier to get than ever before and seldom being without a character with either

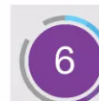


a blaster or a lightsaber, you could probably reach the credits with your eyes shut. Not that anybody really buys into a Lego game looking for a stiff challenge, of course – it's just worth mentioning as, unless you're messing about with a friend or guiding a youngling through the game, it can often start to feel tedious.

Production values are typically excellent, although it must be said that with her physical acting replaced by a digitised toy leaping around, some of Daisy Ridley's line delivery grates even more than in the movie. If you adore the film, the chance to play through what is effectively the director's cut will likely leave you beaming, but anyone else will notice that one movie can't be stretched to fill a template designed for three – not without leaving sizeable gaps, at least.

VERDICT

SOME NEAT ADDITIONS BUT THEY'RE SPREAD FAR TOO THIN

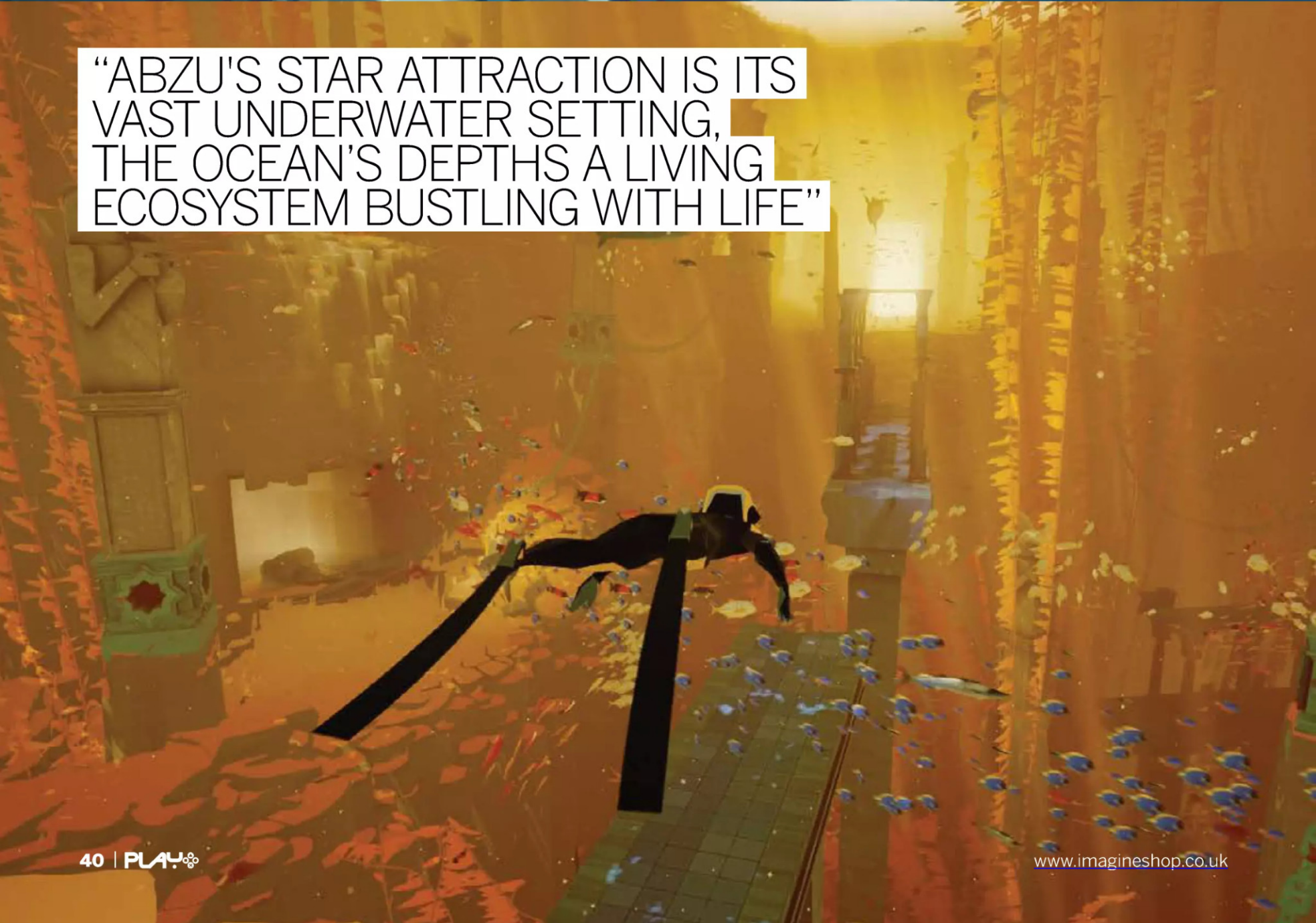


PlayMag_UK scored 6 for
Lego Star Wars:
The Force Awakens

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

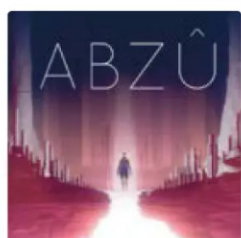


"ABZU'S STAR ATTRACTION IS ITS VAST UNDERWATER SETTING, THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS A LIVING ECOSYSTEM BUSTLING WITH LIFE"



Abzu

Down where it's wetter. But better?



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
505 Games

DEVELOPER
Giant Squid Studios

PSN PRICE
£15.99

PLAYERS
1



Plumbing the depths of Abzu's mysterious ocean is, ironically enough, a breath of fresh air. There are no boss fights, no scampering between cover; instead, it's just you and the deep blue sea – and the experience is both relaxing and beautiful.

Not that there aren't any stakes in *Abzu* worth fighting for. The game is a story of one being's resistance against a darkness spreading across the ocean. But rather than plunge us into the stress of a battlefield, *Abzu's* approach is to instead make its hero more of an unstoppable wave of hope than a one-man army.

The game's hero is presented as something of an enigma, but clues as to his origins are scattered throughout the underwater world. Hieroglyphics that decorate the halls of long-forgotten ruins seem to give us some idea of his race's history, while the few in-engine cutscenes flesh out his character without a word ever being spoken.

Perhaps the easiest way to describe him, though, is as a kind of mute Aquaman. Much like DC's hero, he's perfectly at home in the water, never once requiring to return to the surface (though the option is often there should you want to). He also shares Aquaman's kinship with undersea creatures and can swim amongst sharks and killer whales (and even hitch a ride on them) without fear of attack.

But the game's star attraction isn't its hero, but rather the giant aquarium that is its underwater setting. Its depths are a living ecosystem bustling with life and the intentionally laid-back gameplay leaves you free to explore at your leisure. There are even points where you can sit and meditate – which really means that you can leave the hero behind and camera-hop from fish-to-fish to soak up the ambience and take a few photos, should you wish.

Abzu's art direction is one of minimalist splendour. Though far from photorealistic (it's not like that was ever the goal here), every sea creature, kelp forest and ruined structure looks sumptuous, while the scale of some of the larger whales – not to mention other more wondrous animals – is truly striking.

Swimming through the water is just as relaxing as impartially observing it, with the fluidity of the hero's movement only adding to

the spectacle. The only wrinkle occurs when there's a need to interact with a certain object, or squeeze through a narrow opening. If you don't get position the character spot-on first time, you'll end up having to re-position both the camera and player character which does have the knock-on effect of breaking your captivation in the game.

You might be thinking that *Abzu* is just one big fish bowl with little else to do, but that's not entirely the case. The game is divided into a series of separate areas through which progress can only be made by completing certain tasks. The problem is these can be accomplished disappointingly easily.

An early area, for example, requires that a number of undersea drones (presumably relics of a long-forgotten race) must be found and activated so they can be used to slice through otherwise impassable seaweed – but that's the extent of the 'puzzle'. Later in the game, machines must be put into motion in order to open sealed doors but again, there's nothing else more taxing than finding the machines and pressing a button on your control pad.

It's obvious that Giant Squid was trying to walk the fine line between making *Abzu's* objectives as unobtrusive as possible, while at the same time giving players something more to do than simply explore the ocean. Unfortunately, by not fully committing to proper puzzles, the objectives fall flat and become exactly the kind of chore that was presumably trying to be avoided. One look at a new area and you will know exactly what you must do and how to do it, and so begins another round of going through the motions.

At least there's a more abstract challenge in piecing together what the hero's mysterious quest actually means. The game's three-hour length makes playing the game multiple times easily accomplishable, but even after the repeated plays, the open ending is left to personal interpretation.

With its approach, design and in so many other ways *Abzu* most closely resembles thatgamecompany's *Journey* and *Flower*. No surprise given that Giant Squid Studio's creative director, Matt Nava, was previously art director at TGC. Intrigue, minimalist visuals and gaming for the purposes of meditative relaxation form the core of all three titles. If anything, *Abzu* feels a blending of *Journey* and *Flower*. But, though it comes close, it never



quite attains the emotion and drive that made thatgamecompany's titles so compelling.

Where *Abzu* more than matches its spiritual predecessors is with its orchestral score that brilliantly reflects the mood and immediacy of the gameplay. When you're in an area that can be explored at leisure, you'll be backed by gentle, playful strings, while the odd faster section – such as transitions between areas where slipstreams speed the player along – give the orchestra the opportunity to truly cut loose. The result being breathless, though brief, sequences where the score's tempo boosts the pace and intensity of the action.

If you go into *Abzu* knowing what to expect, you won't be disappointed. Few games have such capacity to draw the player in with beautiful artistic direction and subtle environmental storytelling alone. The addition of puzzles with a bit of meat to them and giving the hero just slightly more growth (see *Journey's* main character) would have made *Abzu* a classic. Even without these, it remains a mesmerising and memorable experience for anyone who wants to dive in.

VERDICT

ATMOSPHERE SAVES THE DAY HERE



PlayMag_UK scored 7 for
Abzu

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness

To boldly tread familiar ground



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Square Enix

DEVELOPER

Tri-Ace

PSN PRICE

£49.99

PLAYERS

1



If we had to name a series that has continually disappointed us, it would be *Star Ocean*. Despite its superb *Final-Fantasy-meets-Star-Trek* setting, the series had fallen flat with its last release, *The Last Hope*, and this new title in the series continues the downward trend.

Like its predecessor, it's not that the game is bad, it just isn't ambitious. It doesn't set out to wow you, yet it fulfils the bare minimum requirements of game design so that it doesn't really offend anyone. This is why *Integrity And Faithlessness* disappoints us: it has brand heritage, it has a seasoned developer and publisher behind it, it has a great premise, which is also its USP; it has all the ingredients to deliver the epic that it promises to be, but it doesn't tap into any of its strengths and ends up falling short and not caring about it.

Presentation is generally pretty weak – textures look flat, cutscenes are garish and the field areas are hardly PS4 quality. There are moments where the game presents some neat visuals, granted, but we could count the instances we felt 'mild awe' on one hand. It looks nice at a cursory glance, but the beauty is skin deep.

The superficial nature of the game doesn't stop there. Its combat looks like a decent ARPG setup, with the ability to 'cancel' attacks into one another to maintain an assault on enemies. This, however,

descends into mashing X then Circle (light and strong attack) repeatedly and occasionally holding either button down to trigger an ability, ad infinitum. You can freely switch between teammates and cue up skills, which you'll want to take advantage of as playing alongside the AI is more tedious than dealing with a PPI robot, as allies run into harm's way and ignore their own fragile mortal forms.

Thankfully the system supporting the combat is more in-depth. You can unlock a varied pool of Skills by finding tomes throughout the world, and there's the option to unlock Roles, which give you passive abilities. These also script the AI teammates to perform actions in certain situations, which sort of works. Sometimes.

While *IAF* seems to aim for the middle of the road, its story is surprisingly competent. Unlike most contemporary JRPGs, *IAF* plays it extremely straight, refusing to conform to the mandatory nonsense that we've seen in games like *Sword Art Online*. It's just a shame to see such a well-loved series be treated with seeming indifference.

VERDICT

STRONG PREMISE, MEDIOCRE EXECUTION



PlayMag_UK scored 6 for
Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)

Kobold Bandit



"IT'S NOT THAT THE GAME IS BAD – IT JUST ISN'T IN ANY WAY AMBITIOUS"

AXD The Burst gauge builds as you defeat enemies and perform counterattacks. The more you build it, the more bonuses you accrue from winning battles – more EXP, for example. You can expend it as a last resort to deliver a powerful attack. It's a neat system.

2 Hits

890

Reserve Rush

Bonus SP 0% FOL +64.4% EXP +82.7%

TARGET

			
3269	3959	2131	2679
902	519	420	819



"A THREE-WAY WAR OF ATTRITION
BETWEEN YOURSELF, YOUR BOSSES
AND THE PRISON'S POPULATION"



Prison Architect

Get busy shivving, get busy buying

△OX△ Much of the game's odd humour is delivered by the tutorial's first CEO, a stern bureaucrat who talks very frankly about things like prisoner executions and drug abuse, while also randomly peppering conversations with Partridge-isms like, "Butter my arse!"



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Double Eleven

DEVELOPER

Introversion

PSN PRICE

£19.99

PLAYERS

1



Endlessly unappreciated and constantly bungled, the videogame tutorial is one of the few areas of game design that persistently

manages to shirk innovation. A clever tutorial can bolster a mediocre game and a clumsy one can distance you from a masterpiece, but even the greatest studios in the world persistently fail to explore beyond boilerplate bouts of monkey see, monkey do. *Prison Architect's* tutorial is a clear-cut masterpiece because it uses a brusque narrative to disguise a totally unpalatable bombardment of information.

Make no mistake though, the stories in the "Prison Stories" tutorial mode are the oldest chestnuts in the world: the murderous husband on death row after catching his wife and lover in flagrante; the splintering of a disloyal mafioso family; the feud between a good-hearted doctor and an embittered prison guard. This surfeit of originality is never detrimental simply because a knowing and off-kilter tone is established quickly, and pivotal scenes are often comprised of just a few curt exchanges. But as this hackneyed yarn winds up, you realise that you've had a sophisticated jungle of systems pushed into your head without even realising.

The finer details of building a prison from scratch are left for you to discover, although you won't need many pointers if you take advantage of good old common sense: multiple doors prevent choke-points (and thus unnecessary drama), it's always worth tapping those payphones, your admin staff don't need much space, and so on. Once you're up and running, the whole experience becomes a three-way war of attrition between yourself, your bosses and the population of your lock-up. Managing budget is of primary importance because you're paid per prisoner, per day. Run a small, open jail for a while, with rehab programs and a common room, and you'll soon believe you can bring in more volatile prisoners, who in turn net you more cash.

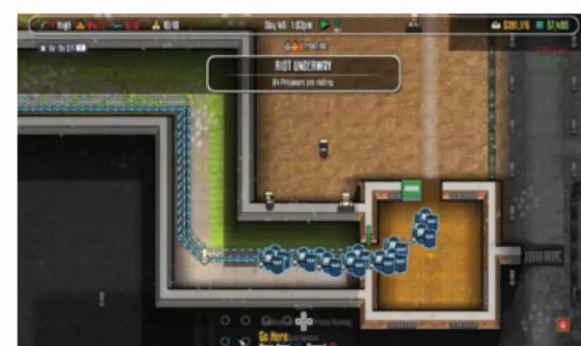
Navigation on the PS4 port might be slightly wonky, but you get used to it. This is a crazily thorough and thoughtful management sim; slick and surprising enough to recommend regardless.

VERDICT

SMART, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND UNIQUELY COMPELLING.

PlayMag_UK scored **8** for
Prison Architect

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE





△×□ The overworld map of *I Am Setsuna* enables you to wander to different areas in the gameworld freely. There are a few too many loading screens between these sections and you end up wishing enemies could attack at this time as well.

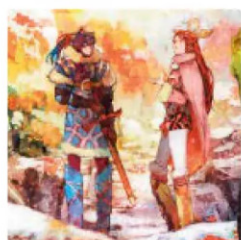
"IT FEELS QUINTESSENTIALLY JAPANESE, WHILE STILL READING LIKE SOMETHING PULLED OUT OF A EUROPEAN FOLKTALE"





I Am Setsuna

A heart, a soul, and a foot planted firmly in the past



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Square Enix

DEVELOPER
Tokyo JRPG Factory

PSN PRICE
£32.99

PLAYERS
1



Imitation, so the proverb goes, is the sincerest form of flattery. So if the JRPG veterans that are *Chrono Trigger* and the early *Final Fantasy* games had

faces, they'd almost certainly be blushing. Tokyo Game Factory's debut game makes its mimicry clear from the outset – and there a few better examples to have on your bedroom wall – but there's a handful of fresh ingredients the new Japanese studio adds to the mix that makes for a satisfying, if poignant broth.

Know this: *I Am Setsuna* is a relentlessly sad experience. Not a crushing one, forcing you to squirm at every moment like a season of *Game Of Thrones*, but rather a prolonged sense of melancholy. The fact that your virtual vessel – a masked mercenary wandering a medieval world gripped by a perpetual winter – is charged with protecting the titular Setsuna as she readies herself for a sacrifice only she can offer, makes every fight, conversation and moment of exploration all the more bittersweet. It feels quintessentially Japanese, while still reading like something pulled out of a European folktale.

That juxtaposition runs through every fibre of *I Am Setsuna*, thanks to the mingling of classic JRPG sensibilities with a world that feels distinctly western in tone and humour – as well as a soundtrack written by the talented Tomoki Miyoshi

and performed by composer and instrumentalist Randy Kerber. That cross-pollination doesn't feel contrived in the way it did with Ubisoft's *Child Of Light*, creating a meeting of cultures in its own way.

That aforementioned use of ATB will please fans looking for a dose of old school JRPG sensibilities. The usual elements are here – combat is semi turn-based, with an gauge enabling you to take action as it refills. Combat can get a little repetitive to begin with, as befits the genre, but the introduction of Spritnites and Singularities (crystals and buffs that offer powerful special moves or group attacks and heals) help give each new encounter a depth that gets deeper as you delve.

Unfortunately, that depth offered by the battle system over time never feels balanced – once you have access to the core of its features, you can easily tip the contest in your favour. It robs the endgame of tension, something that would heighten that sadness in its soul were it better calibrated. Yet for that imbalance, you'll likely be smiling (and weeping) by the time its credits roll.

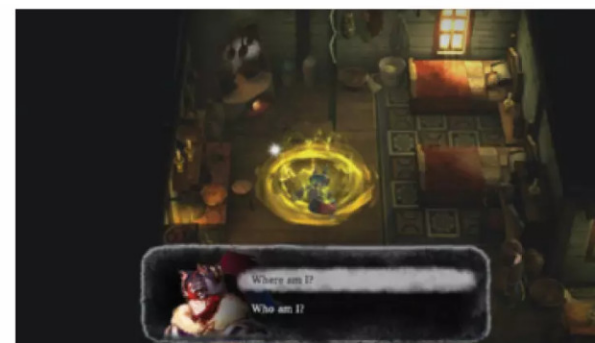
VERDICT

AN EMOTIONAL, IF LOPSIDED, TALE



PlayMag_UK scored 8 for
I Am Setsuna

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



ΔOX□ The game feels a lot like classic RPGs such as *Chrono Trigger* and early *Final Fantasy* – perfect if the modern JRPG scene no longer caters to your tastes.





Overcooked

Couch co-op cooked to perfection

△×□ Kitchens aren't always this simple – you could find yourself preparing food on a perilous icy platform or amid other hazards. This game will never let you get comfortable.



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Team17

DEVELOPER
Ghost Town Games

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1-4



Let's get this out of the way right at the start: *Overcooked* is one of the best couch co-op games ever made.

You'll laugh, scream and have one of the best nights it's possible to have with a group of friends and a console.

Taking place in the delightful Onion Kingdom, *Overcooked* has a visual design strongly influenced by Jim Henson – with a hint of Nintendo at its best. You and up to three friends are tasked with taking orders and preparing food for the waiting public. Easy? Of course not.

Overcooked presents you with an order, the ingredients you need, a chopping board, oven and plates. Simple, right? You've made food before; the lot of you can just get to work. Of course, that's when things begin to break down and you realise there needs to be a plan. One person should be on chopping, one washing up, one on ingredient collection and one on cooking and sending the food out. Bravo, you passed! But wait, you only got one star out of a possible three? You need these stars to progress to the next level, so it's back to the drawing (and chopping) board.

Just when you think you have the perfect strategy, *Overcooked* changes the rules: sections of the kitchen will move at random, trapping certain people in certain areas

“YOU WILL GENUINELY SHOUT THINGS LIKE ‘ONIONS! ONIONS!’ AT YOUR FRIENDS. YOU WILL NEED TO BE VOCAL TO SUCCEED”

meaning they can't do their assigned job any more. The conveyor belts made to transport things to your friends on the other side of the room now throw your food in to a bin if you don't coordinate. You will genuinely shout things like “Onions! Onions! Onions!” at your friends. You will need to be vocal to succeed.

To get the full three stars on every level, you're going to need to get serious, though. This sort of hunt for perfection brings with it a beautiful madness. We actually drew diagrams of the perfect movement patterns for some of the toughest levels.

Overcooked isn't without its flaws: playing alone sees you controlling two characters at the same time, leaving one to chop ingredients while you swap to another to cook. Versus mode can be fun with four players but if there are three of you it simply won't let you play and

two makes you control extra characters in the same manner as single-player. This in turn makes you notice the lack of online play even more. However, when a game is as balanced and perfect in co-op mode, it's hard to worry about these things too much

This game will enter your regular game night rotation for years to come – it's up there with the likes of *Towerfall Ascension*, *Starwhal* and *Sportsfriends*. If you need a new game to play with three friends, this could just be the one.

VERDICT

AN INSTANT CLASSIC AND CLOSE TO PERFECTION



PlayMag_UK scored 9 for
Overcooked

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



“HEADLANDER FILTERS TRANSHUMANISM THROUGH A COMEDY LENS, BUT IT NEVER PROVOKES THOUGHT”



Headlander

Invasion of the body snatcher



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Adult Swim Games

DEVELOPER
Double Fine

PSN PRICE
£14.99

PLAYERS
1



A Headlander reviews word-cloud would be pure filth. There's no real way to write about this game without talking about giving

robots head – your head, to be precise – or mentioning shag-pile carpets. You see, the game's core concept is that you are a head. The last human alive, you have no body, lungs, or any of that good stuff; you're just a voiceless, rocket-propelled head stuck in a retro-futurist dystopia full of fashion conscious robots who love plush carpets.

We've mugged civilians for their wheels in countless games, but this 2D Metroidvania has you steal their bodies instead: robodogs, interactive maps, civilians, security and even cleaning droids can be commandeered by your floating bonce. Each has a purpose, whether it be downloading layouts, getting through security or slipping through a vent.

Rocketing around these seventies sci-fi kitsch environments feels great, as does hovering near whatever you're trying to take over and removing their dome – there's just enough resistance for it to feel satisfyingly tactile. And when you have a body, moving about just feels right, even without a jump button. Who needs to jump when you can just launch your head across gaps anyway?

The combat brings the game down, though. You bodysnatch colour-coded security bots to pass appropriately-coloured doors, either by sucking off their noggin or shooting it off. You want to avoid damaging the body too much, as that's yours when you're anchored in. Basically, combat requires precision, but it's chaotic. When there are multiple enemies, the screen cracks with multicoloured laser fire, ricocheting from walls, crunching into metal bodies and crumbling scenery. It's tough to keep track of your shots and sometimes you'll even shoot yourself and have to find a new host. It's messy and it lacks nuance. You can take cover, but often it's better to just spray until your health dwindles, rocket off, steal a body and do it all again.

Combat intensity goes up in tandem with the complexity of Headlander's backtrack-heavy maps, but it never progresses beyond throwing more stuff at you. You



grow stronger, but the growing odds negate that strength. And anyway, you respawn almost immediately back at the start of the room in which you die, so there's no peril or punishment either. Combat is kind of just there, and it gets in the way of the great comedy, lovely environments and compulsive exploration.

There are attempts at switching up the formula, but these are brief departures. Like the combat, it feels like the game's story, outside of gags, also has nothing to say. Headlander filters transhumanism through a comedy lens, but it never provokes thought. Considering you're all head, you'd like to think there would be more brains on display...

VERDICT

AN INTERESTING CONCEPT MARRED BY LIMP COMBAT

PlayMag_UK scored **6** for Headlander
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



FORMAT PLAYSTATION

RELEASE DATE 31 AUGUST 1996

PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

DEVELOPER NAUGHTY DOG

PLAY SCORE 84%

METACRITIC SCORE N/A



CRASH BANDICOOT

The platformer that showed off the potential of the Sony PlayStation at an early age is the same game that put Naughty Dog on the industry's map. Getting Crash from concept to release was no easy task, but it paid dividends for Sony, Universal and everyone else involved in Naughty Dog's passion project...

Crash Bandicoot went on a long journey before making it to the forefront of the PlayStation's exemplary early-life line-up – when Naughty Dog moved onto the game, it wasn't even set in stone as a PlayStation release; the developer flirted with 3DO, Atari Jaguar and Sega Saturn as a viable release platform for the game before settling on Sony's PlayStation... purely because of how streamlined the development units were, and how 'sexy' the advertising campaign had made the machine look.

So by 1994, Naughty Dog had approached Universal Interactive Studios, set up shop in the publisher's backlot, and began to work on a character that would be a mascot for the blossoming PlayStation console: Sega had managed to propel Sonic to mascot status early in the Mega Drive's lifespan, and Mario had been doing the rounds for Nintendo for over a decade at this point. Naughty Dog noted this, and took design notes from characters that existed before and amalgamated them into Crash's earliest form: Willie the Wombat.

Once the character was in place, Naughty Dog would begin the most important development cycle the PlayStation would see in its early life – *Crash Bandicoot* didn't just solve coding/hardware problems related to its game, it also managed to figure out shortcuts and 'hacks' in the PlayStation's infrastructure that would be passed on to other developers, allowing them to extract even more power from the fledgling system and create the best games possible via clever work-arounds that overcame its shortcomings.

It all started out when design veterans Joe Pearson and Charles Zembillas were brought in to design the characters and the world, opting for smooth, squash-and-stretch-style animations that would riff off the Looney Tunes art direction. *Crash Bandicoot* was one of the first games on the market to apply 'soft-body animations' to gaming – and it was all based on the Disney-produced theory book *The Illusion Of Life*. Many games would follow Naughty Dog's lead with this kind of animation – the studio was a trailblazer.

THE ANATOMY OF CRASH

Crash Bandicoot was a watershed moment for platform gaming, but what inspired it in the first place?



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

The *Sonic* template was studied closely when making *Crash*, but Naughty Dog wanted to move the camera behind the main character rather than have it side-on.



TASMANIAN ANIMALS

When researching mascot characters, one of the artists bought in a field guide to Tasmanian animals – Crash Bandicoot could easily have been a wombat.



PINKY AND THE BRAIN

Main antagonist Neo Cortex was to be a 'more malevolent' Brain in the game, obsessed with minions, with N. Brio acting more like Pinky.

Initially, the game was going to utilise a full 3D camera, but Andy Gavin and Dave Baggett (the only two programmers on the whole project!) soon ran into hardware limitations, and so *Crash*'s iconic 3D pathways were chosen as level templates instead. This meant that Crash was always kept on a 'spline', and that the console could calculate exactly what would be on-screen at any one time – in the first *Crash Bandicoot*, this was only around 900 polygons at any one time. For comparison, Drake's model alone in *Uncharted* is around 25,000.

As such, the team managed to cram several hundred thousand environment meshes into the level, but only render a handful of them at any one time... a 'cheat' that allowed *Crash* to look so good, so vibrant, so rich, despite its 1996 release. Because of the way the camera followed Crash in a third-person view – a reinterpretation of the classic platformers that launched Nintendo and Sega consoles – the game was widely referred to as 'Sonic's Ass Game' until the name *Crash Bandicoot* stuck, fairly late on in development.

To make sure the player would understand exactly where the orange-furred bandicoot was at all times, the design team gave Crash black gloves and dark shoes – allowing you to at least read his silhouette if he was washed out against the bright vistas the game was rendering. It was another smart move from the team, one that you'll see imitated in everything

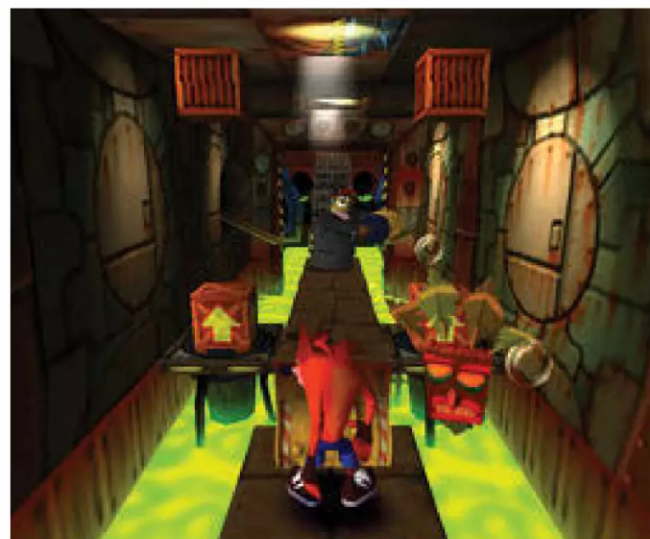
"THE GAME WAS WIDELY REFERRED TO AS 'SONIC'S ASS GAME' UNTIL THE NAME 'CRASH BANDICOOT' STUCK"

KEY FACTS

■ Dr. Neo Cortex was invented as the design team were served a 'mediocre' Italian meal from a waiter with a large head...

■ Naughty Dog paid over \$35,000 for its first PlayStation development kit!

■ The composer of the game's OST – Josh Mancell – has cited Aphex Twin as an influence for the game's chaotic, off-kilter soundtrack



that came after, and helped *Crash* stick out against its only real genre competition at the time – *Donkey Kong Country*.

Strangely enough, one of the most famous elements of the *Crash Bandicoot* series – the mysterious 'wumpa fruit' – was added incredibly late on in development, when the team discovered that play-testers were solving the game's puzzles too quickly, and when focus groups complained of empty, wide-open spaces in the game's visual language. Director Jason Rubin and programmer Andy Gavin took a Saturday in the workplace to texture, design and implement the fruit, as well as the crates they were found in (and a bonus TNT crate to make things just a bit more difficult).

All this iteration and attention to detail led to one of the most technically solid 3D platformers the world had seen, and it gave the PlayStation the mascot character it needed as Sony continued the relentless campaign to push the console into the homes of not just the players that were upgrading from the Mega Drive or SNES, but the general population... as such, *Crash Bandicoot* was a lot of now-adult gamer's introduction to videogames. And what an introduction to have.



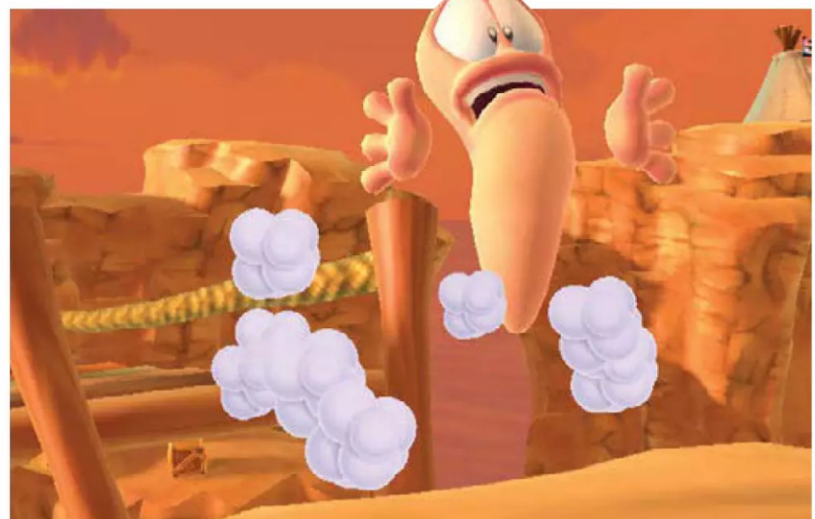
8 BRILLIANT COMEDY DEATHS IN GAMES

Crash became well-known for the amusing ways he could perish, but he's not the only character to go out laughing...



EATING BOB THE GOLDFISH

■ *Earthworm Jim 2* takes potshots at lots of gaming tropes. The best realisation of this is when you encounter Bob The Goldfish in the second game, and a full on *Mortal Kombat*-style lead-up to the battle makes you think this is going to be a harsh encounter... until Jim simply picks Bob out of his bowl and eats him.



PRODDED INTO OBLIVION

■ We were debating whether to include getting a 'home run' with a baseball bat, dropping a concrete donkey, flinging a sheep... but no. The best *Worms* death – in every game in the series – has to be the simple prod. A small poke to an enemy and seeing their face drop as they plunge into watery oblivion... so satisfying.



SHOOTING FACE MCSHOOTY IN THE FACE

■ Appearing in the *Borderlands 2* mission titled 'Shoot This Guy In The Face', Face McShooty wants you to, well, shoot him. In the face. Shoot him anywhere else and he'll get quite aggressive, asking if you indeed even know what a face is.



ACCIDENTALLY KILLING A PATIENT

■ Bloaty Heads, Slack Tongues, Invisible Men, Uncommon Colds and Heaped Piles. Fail to treat these afflicted patients in *Theme Hospital* right and they'll die. That will upset your other patients and even cause the Grim Reaper to languidly appear from nowhere and summon the departed to walk with them to Hell.



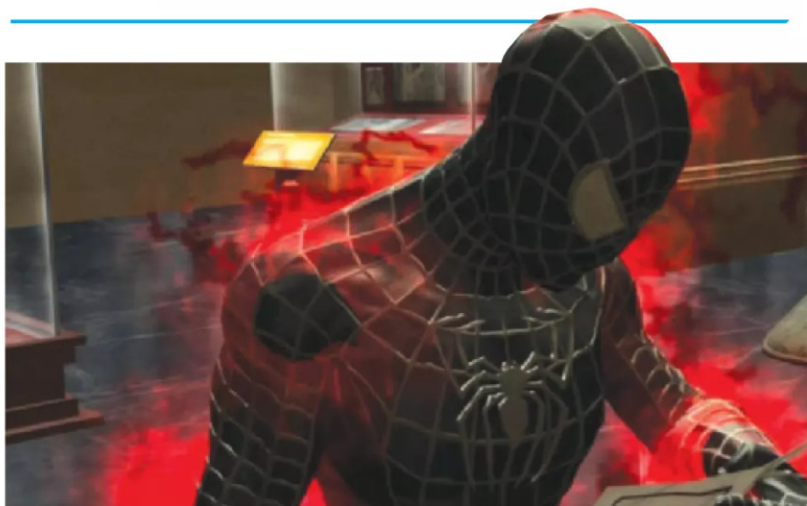
SETTING YOUR SIMS ON FIRE

■ We're all sadists, there's no point in denying it. That's why *The Sims* exists, right? Lock them in a room with nothing but clown portraits to look at until they die, put them in a pool and delete the ladder... whatever takes your fancy. Our personal favourite was always getting a big group of them together and putting a sofa right next to the fireplace...



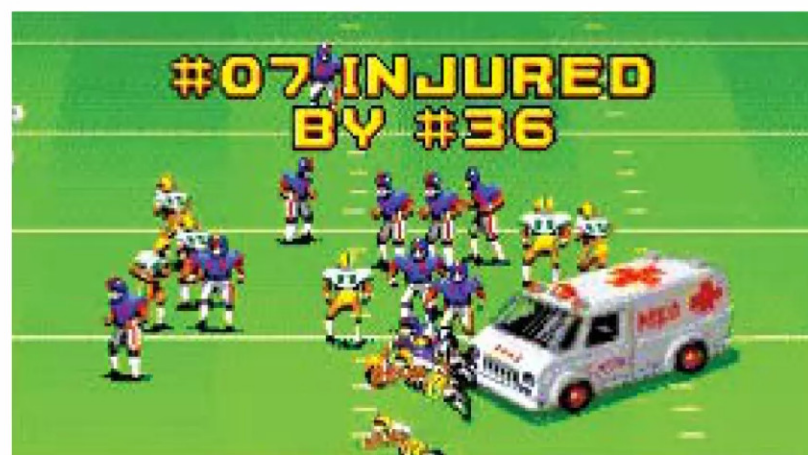
SHOOT THE LAKE

■ Before any guides came out for *Resident Evil 4*, the lake monster was a huge surprise. We simply wanted to stand on the pier in the lake and shoot some fish for the extra points, but no, we didn't realise that emptying a whole handgun into the lake would summon its gargantuan guardian, who pops out and swallows you whole.



SPLATTING THE SPIDER

■ *Spider-Man 3* was full of bugs, but it's the emotional scene in a burning building that provides this hilarious death. Screw up the QTE input at the last minute, and you'll faceplant the floor (with a horrible squishy animation) and the building explodes with you in it. It shouldn't be funny, but the bad graphics and general low quality makes it so good.



RUN OVER BY AN AMBULANCE

■ When a player goes down injured in *John Madden Football '92*, for some utterly bizarre and unknown reason, an ambulance bursts onto the pitch and rushes to pick up the downed player... but on its way, it'll pretty much tear through any other player in its way, obliterating them en route. An ambulance that kills people. Amazing.

PLAY+ PLUS

EXTENDED PLAY • DLC • MULTIPLAYER • TROPHIES • VIDEO

INTERVIEW

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY, SON

Resident Evil VII producer Masachika Kawata on reinventing the popular horror franchise

Where did the inspiration for *Resident Evil VII*'s derelict plantation mansion come from?

We felt it was the best setting for creating the horror experience we had in mind, as it allows us to create an unsettling atmosphere where you don't know what lies in wait, while being a fairly realistic type of location.

When it came to designing the location, what feelings were you trying to evoke from players? What was the intent behind the demo?

Our strategic intent was of course to show the *Resident Evil VII* concept to the world as early as possible after announcement, but in terms of design, we wanted to create a scary kind of "ghost house" where the player is afraid

to even move forward and see what awaits them. When we designed the location, we didn't start out from a 'level design' perspective; rather, we focused on designing a house with a layout that lets you feel people could really live there. That contributes to the feeling that there is a presence somewhere in the house and I think that has turned out really well.

Whether it is in real life, film or videogames, what do you actually count as 'terror'? What is the feeling of terror?

To me, terror is the unknown, and the possibility of myself coming to harm. Those things are related but not exactly the same, and I think that's why we often fear things we can't understand.

What is it that we find so terrifying about the idea of being trapped in a haunted house? This is a theme Capcom has returned to time and time again since *Sweet Home* back in 1989 and, of course, the original *Resident Evil*...

Dark halls leading to unknown spaces bring out the natural curiosity in we humans, where we want to know what lies ahead despite our instincts telling us not to look. I think it's a universal kind of fear and thrill. And despite the fact that we know it's a game and we aren't going to be in real danger, we still feel the terror of that exploration because we are able to immerse ourselves in the situation.

This is exactly the kind of horror experience we wanted to prioritise in

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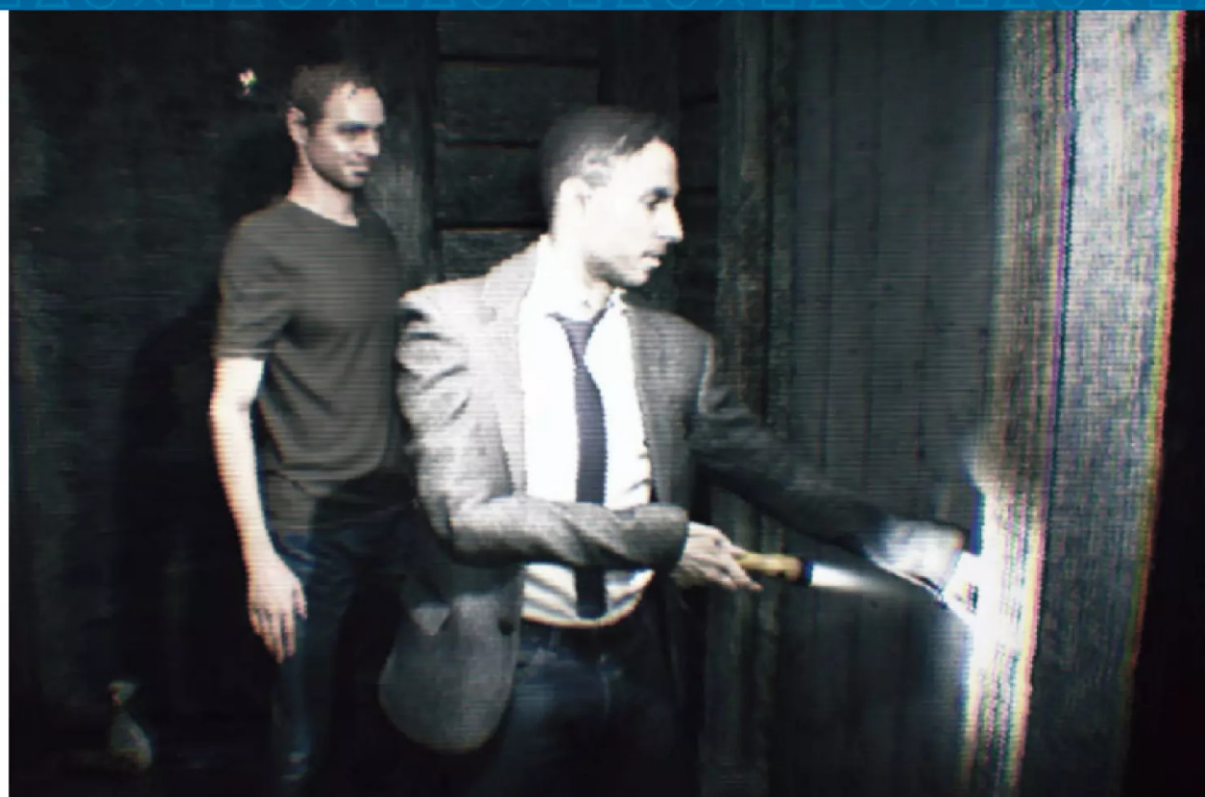
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the design of the game right from the start of the project, and we're using our visual and game design expertise to bring you the state of the art in survival horror.

What was behind the decision to shift into a more intimate first-person perspective?

It was in order to let players experience the terror more directly. Seeing the darkness and mysterious spaces unfold through your 'own eyes' has such a direct way of scaring people.

Two interesting elements for us were the heavy supernatural elements of the game – with the continued ghost sighting – and how the VHS tape impacted the regular

world. Will these be important elements in the final game?

I think the VHS tapes are a fascinating idea and you'll have to wait and see what role they play in the final game! When it comes to the supernatural parts, we wanted to add something a little different and felt the ghosts were a fun addition to the demo. We're not saying the final game will be full of supernatural elements, though!

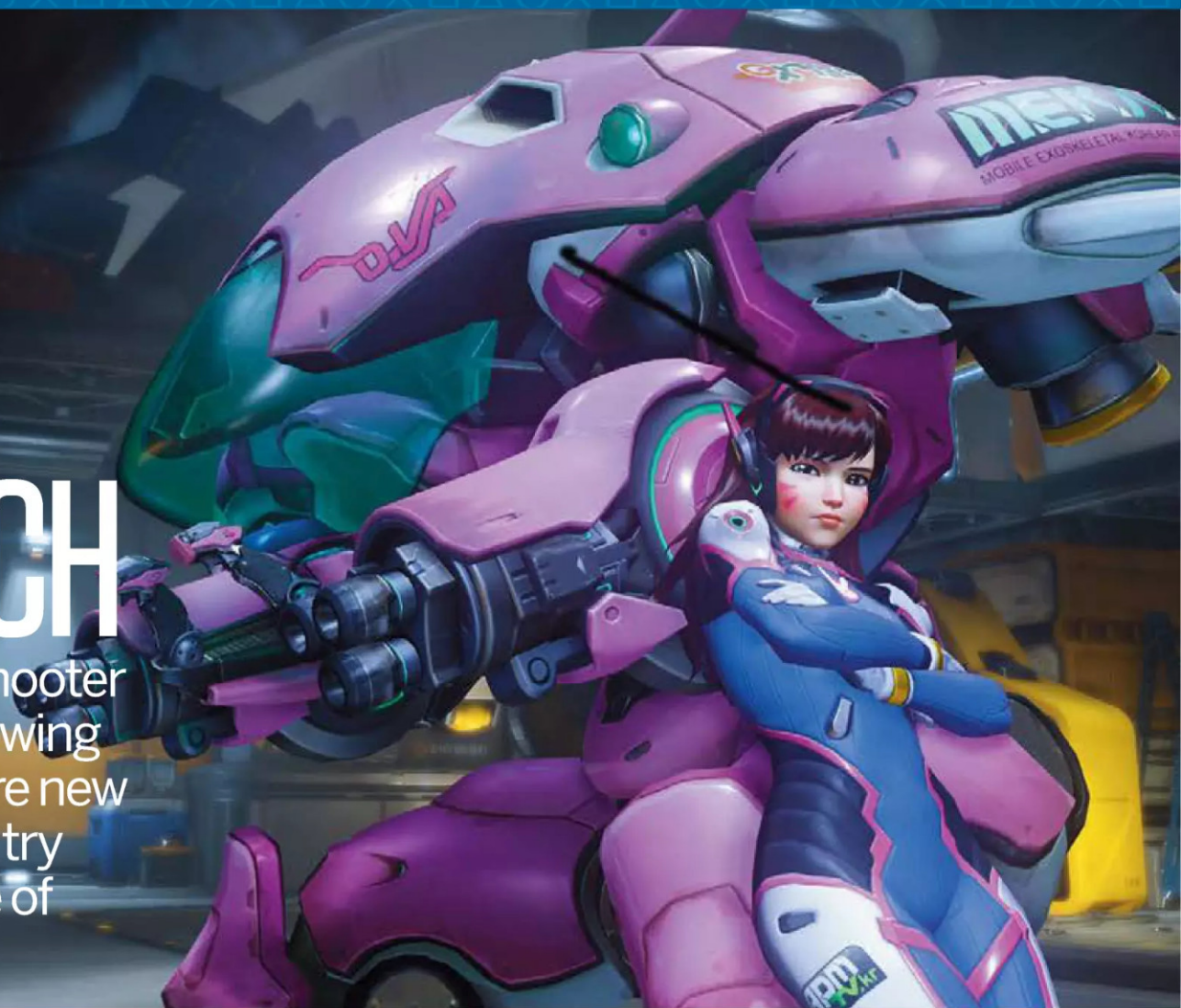
What is your personal favourite part of the demo?

I like it when you kick a bottle or can on the floor and make a sudden noise. The more carefully and deliberately you try to move through the house, the more frightened you get by those sudden noises, which I find really fun.

EXTENDED PLAY

OVERWATCH

Blizzard's competitive shooter picked up an insane following almost overnight. If you're new to the genre and want to try similar things, give some of these delights a go...



COMPETITIVE

■ **OVERWATCH WAS ACTUALLY** updated fairly recently to add in the anticipated ranked playlist, so if you haven't played for a while, it might be time to jump back in and blast the rust off your skills. Like most of Blizzard's games, *Overwatch's* ranked mode will run in seasons that last a few months each. At the start of each, you'll need to complete placement matches to earn your starting grade (a number out of 100 – the higher, the better) which will change to reflect how you perform over time. If you can help it, don't play solo – you'll get far more done with at least one buddy by your side. Randoms can be a nightmare...



TEAM FORTRESS 2

■ **AVAILABLE AS PART** of the such-good-value-for-money-it's-not-even-funny bundle *The Orange Box* for PS3, Valve's class-based shooter is in many ways the game that originally laid the foundations that *Overwatch* builds on. Despite the fact that they're simply named after their classes, the cast oozes character and the concept of being able to identify incoming threats purely based on their silhouettes or key features was pretty much born here. The community isn't what it once was on PS3, but the PC version is still going pretty strong – check it out if you fancy meeting the grandfather of this emerging genre.



PARAGON

■ **EPIC'S NEW FREE-TO-PLAY** MOBA plays pretty strictly by the rules of PC-centric arena battle games, although the third-person camera angle and emphasis on ranged attacks makes it feel familiar for console shooter fans as well. As a stepping stone into the MOBA scene proper, then, games like this and *Smite* could be just the nudge you need – the pace is slower and more considered than in *Overwatch*, but that's because every death matters. If recklessly charging in as Genji fed the enemy team XP, nobody would do it. Who are we kidding? Of course they still would...



ANIMATED SHORTS

■ **FOR A GAME** that doesn't exactly need much in the way of a story to keep players hooked, *Overwatch* has seen a surprising amount of lore and character development. Much of it exists outside the game itself, and Blizzard's absurdly talented CG team even put out a four-part mini-series to accompany the game. The first, *Recall*, focuses on everyone's favourite hyper-smart ape Winston, with

subsequent shorts applying a similar laser focus to other popular characters – *Alive* offers more insight into Widowmaker, *Dragons* covers the backstory of Hanzo and Genji while *Hero* gives Soldier:76 the starring role. They're only short (less than ten minutes apiece) but they're all well worth watching to get a more rounded idea of what the game is actually about, plus they're free to watch online.



GO RAIDING IN DESTINY

■ **THIS IS SOMETHING** of a curveball, sure, but if you find yourself drawn to *Overwatch* for those moments when tight team play pays off, you'll almost certainly get a kick out of *Destiny's* toughest challenges. While these are PvE rather than PvP, each of the three currently available has frequent

moments when all six players need to be working together like cogs in a well-oiled machine. Just like a clutch Overtime push on the final objective in *Overwatch*, overcoming a tricky section in a *Destiny* Raid is supremely rewarding and here, you'll have five buddies to share your moment of triumph with.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE



TRICKY TOWERS

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 28 🏆 1 🏆 6 🏆 7 🏆 14

■ **HOPE YOU LIKE** making towers out of random junk, because that's literally all you'll be doing here. Many of the Trophies are tied to specific Trials – puzzles where the objects you get are at least semi-constant – and while some of the later ones in particular can be tricky, YouTube is your friend here. Solutions of all Trials are already online, but only use them once a challenge has bested you normally! There are surprising amount of online Trophies for a game like this too, so usual advice applies – get them done ASAP while the game is still fresh (well, as fresh as it's ever going to be) or you may find you need to boost for them later. Hey, nobody said becoming a Grand Master Wizard would be easy...



REBEL GALAXY

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 38 🏆 1 🏆 2 🏆 19 🏆 16

■ **WHILE THERE'S NOTHING** especially difficult about the Trophy list for this solid space combat game, it's worth noting that it's one of the most grind-heavy sets of Trophies we've seen in some time. That said, there's nothing missable and all can be obtained in one playthrough (including post-game stuff), so a lot of the milestone ones will be ticked off naturally on your way to the credits. Of those that won't, it's highly recommended that you keep an eye out for Pirate Lord events – these are extremely rare and there's a Trophy for completing 20 of them, meaning you'll likely spend a lot of your mop-up time once the game is over just hoping these guys decide to spawn. Make sure your ship is up to the job, though, as Pirate Lords are pretty tough.





RETRO/GRADE

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 5/5

TROPHIES: 21 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 21

■ **IT'S A GOOD** thing that *Retro/Grade* is pretty good or that horrible Trophy cabinet would be an instant turn-off. The list itself isn't much more interesting, to be honest – it's basically just a checklist of having cleared all levels on all difficulty modes, then doing that again for Astro Admiral awards (read: perfect runs), again on all difficulties. That's a lot of backwards rhythm-shooting.

“YOU WILL PRACTICALLY NEED TO MEMORISE ENTIRE LEVELS ON X-TREME MODE”

As with any music-based game, start low in terms of difficulty and only advance when you're confident in recognising and responding to patterns. You'll practically need to memorise entire levels when it comes to getting Astro Admiral awards on the X-TREME stages, so that's something to look forward to, right?

YAKUZA 5

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 4/5

TROPHIES: 57 🏆 1 🏆 2 🏆 4 🏆 50

■ **ANYONE WHO HAS** ever attempted to get a Platinum for a *Yakuza* game will know the score here but for newcomers, here's the bad news – you're looking at *hundreds* of hours of effort. 'Hall Of Famer' is the backbreaker here, requiring 100% completion and that means innocuous missable items could cause you to miss out on, say, a crafting recipe and lose the Plat. So, brave souls who do go for this evil Platinum, hang onto everything you find, do literally everything you can in all side stories and mini-games and don't sell *anything*, just in case. Oh, and make sure Haruka wins the Princess League during the story – there's another missable Trophy if she doesn't.



ULTRATRON

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 2/5

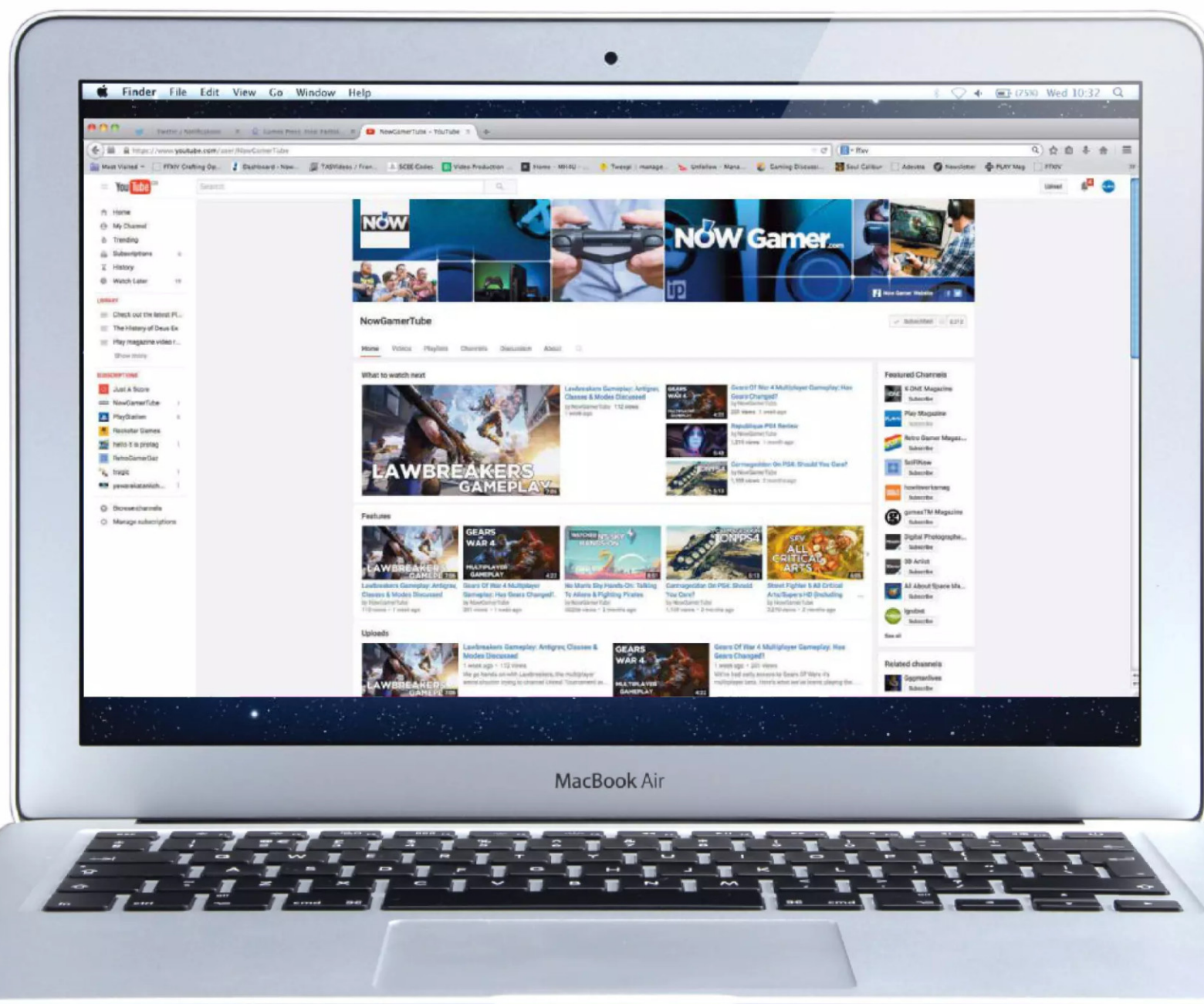
TROPHIES: 12 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 4 🏆 7

■ **IT'S ANOTHER WEAK** showing for Vita owners this month, with PSP title Patapon 3 offering no Trophies at all (though it is still quite good) and this Cross-Buy title being the only other freebie for the handheld. It's a simple retro-style shooter and even though there's no Platinum, what few Trophies there are are thankfully quite easy. Start by blasting through to level 50 – that'll net you all the boss Trophies you need and probably a bunch more besides. Then just mop up what you missed, restarting if you'd rather go for them on easier stages. Oh, and abuse the save system. It only auto-saves when you die or lose, so quitting to menu early can save runs.

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NOMAN'S SKY



EVERYONE'S GAME WILL be totally different, so tune in to see what the procedurally generated universe will throw at us!

GAMESCOM UPDATES



WE'RE JUST FINISHING this issue as Europe's equivalent of E3 is about to start. Follow us online to see what comes out of Cologne.

DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED



THE AUGMENTED SEQUEL is with us at last, so if you don't want to start again just to see a different approach, give them a watch online.

SHARING



PLAYSTATION 4 DIRECTORY

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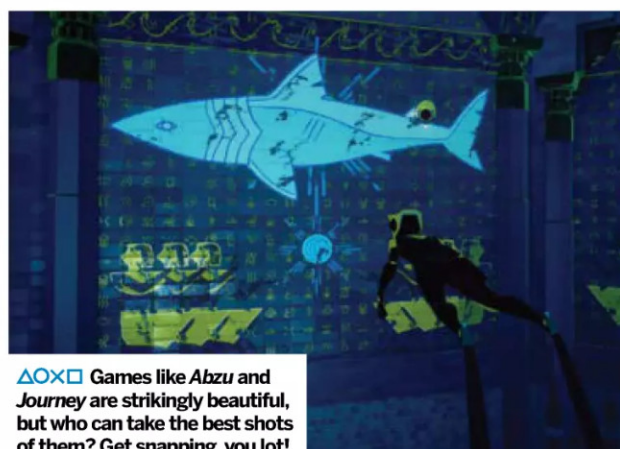
1 Search for Play_Mag_UK in the Friends menu, select our profile, then navigate down to 'Communities'.

2 Press X to open the Play Community, then press X again to join it. Welcome to the family!

SEND US YOUR BEST SCREENS



△○×□ What wonders will you see while playing *No Man's Sky*? Things people may never see again, that's what! Best slap the Share button and let us all see...



△○×□ Games like *Abzu* and *Journey* are strikingly beautiful, but who can take the best shots of them? Get snapping, you lot!



△○×□ Bespoke photo modes can make all the difference in framing the perfect shot. Don't forget to make them work for you.

YOU HAVEN'T
PLAYED...?

EARTH DEFENSE FORCE

If you love B-movies, crazy sci-fi and intense, janky-as-all-hell videogames, you've come to the right place. EDF is the most ridiculous shooter on the market, and it's incredible...

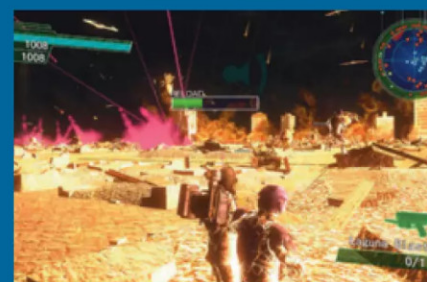


■ **SOMETIMES, GAMES CAN** be awesome without actually being very good. It sounds kind of weird but just as you might ironically enjoy bad movies or throw your best shapes to music that absolutely sucks, a game that technically isn't all that strong can be just as entertaining as the most polished triple-A experience. Proudly sitting at the forefront of this phenomenon is the absolutely bonkers *Earth Defense Force* series, a technical shambles but one of the most ridiculous and enjoyable franchises out there. The premise is simple – the planet is under attack from aliens that range from oversized bugs and giant dragons to UFOs and lumbering robotic things, and it's your job to blow them all into the middle of next week.

It's the scale that makes these games so much fun, each level throwing way more enemies than the engine can even handle at you and weapons levelling entire blocks while sending bits of giant bug everywhere. Ammo is generally unlimited, meaning you can just go nuts with rockets, missiles and lasers as long as you and your sci-fi pest control friends (who can be actual friends, thanks to co-op play) get the job done. New gear and health upgrades pour out of the thousands of things you blow up, granting a steady stream of improvement as you work your way to (usually) a suitably daft mothership showdown. In spite of all its technical issues – perhaps even *because* of them – EDF is stupidly glorious, and gloriously stupid.

ENLIST TODAY!

A quick look at the various different versions available



EDF 4.1 (PS4)

Put the power of PS4 to work by making it render hundreds of giant insects at the same time.



EDF 2 (VITA)

A remake of the PS2 'classic' that started it all. Perfect bug-blasting silliness, right in your pocket. Lovely.



INSECT ARMAGEDDON (PS3)

The last PS3 release is an option for those who haven't upgraded. All EDF games are basically the same anyway...

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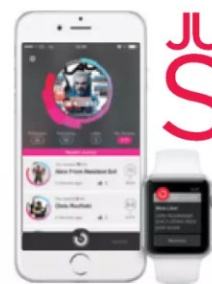


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LET'S PLAY... FREE-TO-PLAY



LUKE ALBIGES DC UNIVERSE ONLINE

8 Back before FFXIV was on console, I put weeks into this surprisingly entertaining MMO, patrolling Gotham and Metropolis alongside former **Play** editor, Ryan King. Good times. Teampey drinks.



LIAM WARR BACK TO THE FUTURE

10 What? It was free on PS Plus that one time. Shut up, it totally counts. Just consider yourself lucky I didn't find a way to shoehorn *Rocket League* in here instead. Wait, that was on Plus as well! Hmmm...



DREW SLEEP PARAGON

8 As a recovering MOBAholic, I sometimes get urges to head back to the arena and dish out generous servings of ham. This helps keep me away from *League Of Legends*, which is good for everybody.



PAUL WALKER-EMIG PLANETSIDE 2

7 It's a real shame this didn't manage to launch earlier – the huge battles are amazing but by the time it came out, there were already better and more popular shooters everywhere. A real missed opportunity.

PS4



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Alekhine's Gun	270	3
Alien: Isolation	249	9
Alienation	270	8
Amplitude	266	8
Arslan: The Warriors Of Legend	268	5
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	257	7
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: India	266	7
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	8
Assassin's Creed Syndicate	264	4
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	6
Axiom Verge	256	9
Batman: Arkham Knight	258	9
Battleborn	271	6
Battlefield 4	238	8
Battlefield Hardline	256	7
Blazblue Chronophantasma Extend	264	9
Bloodborne	256	9
Bloodborne: The Old Hunters	265	9
Bound By Flame	245	6
Broforce	268	6
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops III	264	8
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	7
Child Of Light	244	7
CounterSpy	248	5
DariusBurst: Chronicle Saviours	266	8
Dark Souls III	269	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	269	8
Daylight	245	2
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	7
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	7
Destiny	249	9
Destiny: House Of Wolves	258	8
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	7
Destiny: The Taken King	262	9
Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition	258	8
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	9
Dirt Rally	269	9
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	8
Divinity: Original Sin Enhanced Edition	264	8
Don't Starve	240	8
Doom	271	8
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	8
Dragon Ball Xenoverse	255	5
Dragon Quest Heroes	263	8
Driveclub	250	8
Dying Light	254	9
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	8
EA Sports UFC	246	7
EA Sports UFC 2	269	8
Enter The Gungeon	269	8
Ether One	258	8
Everybody's Gone To The Rapture	261	8
Evolve	254	6
F1 2015	260	8
Fallout 4	264	9
Far Cry 4	251	8
Far Cry Primal	268	8
Fez	243	10
FIFA 15	249	8
FIFA 16	262	9
Final Fantasy Type-0	255	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	9
Firewatch	267	6
Furi	272	8
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	8
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	9
God Of War III Remastered	260	8
Grand Theft Auto V	251	10
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	8
Guilty Gear Xrd -Revelator-	272	9
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	9
Guitar Hero Live	264	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Hardware: Rivals	266	5
Hitman	268	9
Hohokum	248	8
Homefront: The Revolution	271	6
Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number	255	9
inFamous: First Light	249	5
inFamous: Second Son	242	8
Invisible, Inc.	270	9
Just Cause 3	265	7
JStars Victory VS+	260	6
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	8
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	8
King's Quest: A Knight To Remember	261	8
Knack	238	6
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	5
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	6
Lego Dimensions	263	7
Lego Marvel's Avengers	267	6
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	8
Lego Jurassic World	258	7
Lego The Hobbit	244	6
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	9
Lords Of The Fallen	251	7
Lumo	271	7
Madden 16	262	8
Mad Max	262	4
Mercenary Kings	244	8
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	8
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain	261	9
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	8
Mirror's Edge: Catalyst	272	6
Mortal Kombat X	257	9
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	4
N++	261	8
Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm 4	267	8
NBA 2K15	250	8
Need For Speed	264	5
Need For Speed Rivals	238	8
NHL 15	249	6
Not A Hero	267	6
Nuclear Throne	266	8
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	6
Outlast	241	7
Overwatch	271	8
Oxenfree	271	6
PES 2015	250	9
PES 2016	262	9
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	7
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare 2	268	8
Project Cars	258	6
Rainbow Six Siege	265	8
Ratchet & Clank	269	8
République	268	7
Resident Evil HD	253	8
Resident Evil Revelations 2	256	7
Resogun	238	9
Resogun Heroes	247	9
Rock Band 4	263	7
Rocket League	260	8
Rogue Legacy	248	9
Rory McIlroy PGA Tour	260	5
Salt And Sanctuary	269	8
Sébastien Loeb Rally Evo	267	5
Severed	270	8
Sheltered	270	9
Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter	272	6
Shovel Knight	258	9
Skylanders Superchargers	263	7
Skylanders Swap Force	238	7
Skylanders Trap Team	250	7
SOMA	262	8
Star Wars Battlefront	265	6
Street Fighter V	267	9
Strider	242	6
Super Time Force Ultra	262	9
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	8
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	7
Tearaway Unfolded	262	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Teslagrad	253	7
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	2
The Banner Saga 2	272	8
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	9
The Crew	252	5
The Evil Within	250	8
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	10
The Order: 1886	254	8
The Vanishing Of Ethan Carter	260	8
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	257	10
The Witness	267	10
Thief	241	7
This War Of Mine: The Little Ones	267	7
Tiny Brains	240	6
Titan Souls	257	7
Tom Clancy's The Division	268	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5	263	3
TrackMania Turbo	269	8
Transformers: Devastation	263	8
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	3
Transistor	245	9
Trials Fusion	244	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	258	8
Umbrella Corps	272	3
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End	270	10
Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection	263	8
Unravel	267	7
Until Dawn	261	8
Valiant Hearts	247	6
War Thunder	239	8
Wasteland 2: Director's Cut	264	8
Watch Dogs	245	8
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	6
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	8
Wolfenstein: The Old Blood	258	8
WWE 2K15	252	4
WWE 2K16	264	5

PS3



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
007 Legends	225	4
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	6
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	8
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	7
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	7
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	5
Afro Samurai	177	6
After Burner Climax	193	9
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	7
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	4
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	5
Alice: Madness Returns	207	6
Alien Breed: Impact	196	8
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	8
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	6
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	4
Aliens Vs Predator	189	7
Alone In The Dark	173	7
Alpha Protocol	193	8
Army	215	1
Ape Escape	208	5
Aquapazza: Aquaplay Dream Match	239	7
Aqua Panic	193	6
Arcana Heart 3	207	7
Armageddon Riders	207	6
Armored Core: For Answer	173	6
Armored Core 4	153	6
Armored Core V	217	6
Army Of Two	164	8
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	6
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	4
Assassin's Creed	161	5
Assassin's Creed II	186	9
Assassin's Creed III	225	7
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	9
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	7

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

Guilty Gear Xrd -Revelator-	9
Furi	8
The Banner Saga 2	8
Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter	7
Mirror's Edge: Catalyst	6
Umbrella Corps	3

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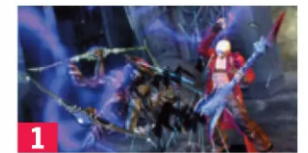
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	7
Asura's Wrath	216	7
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	6
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	7
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	8
Batman: Arkham City	211	9
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	8
Battle Fantasia	176	7
Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	8
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
Battlefield 3	212	8
Battleship	219	4
Bayonetta*	187	9
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	9
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	7
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	8
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	216	7
Bionic Commando	179	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	6
BioShock	172	9
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	230	9
BlackSite	163	4
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	5
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	151	5
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	6
Blitz: The League II	172	6
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	6
Blur	193	8
Bodycount	210	5
Bomberman Ultra	185	8
Borderlands	185	8
Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	6
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	7
Braid	188	9
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	8
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brütal Legend	185	7
Bulletstorm	203	8
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	5
Burnout Crash	211	7
Burnout Paradise	162	8
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	8
Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
Calling All Cars	155	8
Call Of Duty 3	151	5
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	6
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	9
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	8
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	3
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	200	9
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	9
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Carnival Island	213	5
Catan	195	8
Cars 2	208	6
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	215	6
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	8
Civilization Revolution	168	9
Clash Of The Titans	193	6
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
The Club	163	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	9
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	8
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	6
Commander's Challenge	185	6
Command & Conquer	175	4
Conan	160	7
Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	199	7
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	9
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	3
Create	199	7
Critter Crunch	188	9
Cross Edge	182	5
Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	204	7
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubixx HD	207	7
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	181	3
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dante's Inferno	189	8
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	215	7
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	211	9
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	8
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	188	8
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	202	8
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	223	7
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	231	6
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	6
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	201	9
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	203	8
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	6
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	195	8
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	199	7
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	193	9
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	227	7
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	163	9
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	235	9
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	219	7
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	224	9
Disney Infinity	235	8
DJ Hero	186	9
DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	3
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
Double Dragon Neon	224	4
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
Dragon Age: Origins	186	8
Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	4
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	235	8
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	209	7
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	233	5
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	4
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	7
EA Sports Active 2	200	8
EA Sports MMA	198	8
Eat Lead	178	3
echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	202	8
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	9
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	170	4
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	152	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	8
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	176	8
Euforia	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	158	8
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explodemon	203	7
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	185	8
F1 2012	223	7
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	170	5
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	173	10
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	172	7
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	8
Fat Princess	183	6
FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	8
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	236	9
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	9
The Fight	199	4
Fight Night Champion	203	8
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	181	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	190	8
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	8
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	5
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	179	7
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	198	5
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battlegrounds	151	6
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	220	3
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	3
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	6
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
GI Joe	183	2
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	178	4
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	230	9
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	7
The Golden Compass	162	3
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	6
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 5	200	8
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	9
Grand Theft Auto V	236	10

*denotes import review

TEN YEARS AGO BEST REVIEWS (144)



1
DMC3: Special Edition (92%)



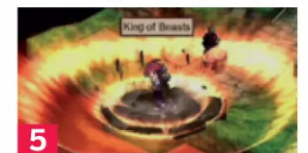
2
Ultimate Ghouls 'N Ghosts (88%)



3
Madden 07 (85%)



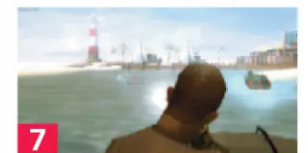
4
Def Jam: Fight For New York (83%)



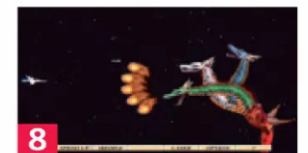
5
Disgaea 2: Cursed Memories (83%)



6
Field Commander (83%)



7
Miami Vice (82%)



8
Gradius Collection (80%)



9
Ace Combat: The Belkan War (80%)



10
Gitaroo Man Lives! (79%)

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



UNDERDOGS

PLAY: BATTLEBORN

While not a bad game per se, 2K's hero shooter got completely drowned out by the deafening rumble of the *Overwatch* hype train. It's a little bit closer to traditional MOBAs, but not *that* close.



XCOM

PLAY: STEAMWORLD HEIST

This outstanding indie effort plays out like a classic turn-based strategy game, only in side-on 2D. With a gorgeous art style and elements of procedural generation to keep you on your toes, tacticians will love it.



BLAZBLUE

PLAY: GUILTY GEAR

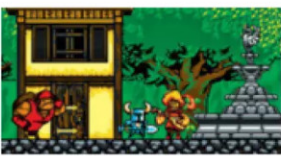
Or vice versa, in fact – the two anime fighters are both in superb shape of late and the latest iterations are the best yet. Fans of 2D fighters owe it to themselves to try both.



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

PLAY: THE CREW

Ubisoft's car-PG had such promise, but having to drive for hours just to unlock decent handling was a kick in the teeth. Also, the decision to name the currency anything other than Crewpons was disgusting.



RETRO GAMES

PLAY: SHOVEL KNIGHT

Lots of indie games shoot for a retro-inspired aesthetic but few pull it off nearly as well as *Shovel Knight*. It's 8-bit as older players fondly remember it rather than how it actually was – the reality was often pretty horrendous.

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Greed Corp	191	7
Grid 2	232	7
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	174	7
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	7
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	184	8
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	7
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	6
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	9
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	181	8
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	6
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	167	6
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	189	9
Heavy Weapon	187	7
Heroes Over Europe	184	4
Hitman: Absolution	225	9
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	7
Homefront	203	6
The House Of The Dead 4	218	8
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	5
Hustle Kings	190	8
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	2
I Am Alive	217	6
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	9
The Incredible Hulk	168	5
inFamous	180	8
inFamous 2	207	8
Inferno Pool	181	8
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	8
Inversion	220	4
Iron Man	166	5
Iron Man 2	193	5
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	8
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	5
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	6
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	6
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	8
Journey	216	9
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	7
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	6
Just Cause 2	190	8
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	7
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	7
Katamari Forever	184	8
Kick-Ass The Game	194	6
Killer Is Dead	235	7
Killzone 2	176	9
Killzone 3	202	8
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	8
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	9
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	7
The King Of Fighters XII	182	7
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	8
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	2
Kung Fu Rider	196	6
Lair	158	5
LA Noire	206	9
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	9
The Last Guy	171	9
Last Rebellion	191	4
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	5
Legendary	173	6
Lego Batman	173	6
Lego Batman 2	221	8
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	7
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	6
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	7
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	7
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	187	8
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	7
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	8
Lego The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	2
Limbo	209	9
LittleBigPlanet	172	9
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	10
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	8
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
London 2012	221	4
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	6
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	4
Lost Planet 2	192	8
Lost Planet 3	236	5
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	209	8
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	188	5
Mafia II	196	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	7
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	8
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	6
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	201	10
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	198	8
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	7
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	192	8
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	9
		<i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	9
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	5
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	8
Mindjack	202	3
Minecraft	240	9
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	173	7
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	192	8
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	205	8
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	233	7
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	151	9
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	9
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	4
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	5
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	195	6
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	224	8
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	6
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	9
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	9
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	8
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	213	6
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	215	3
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	8
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	223	7
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	8
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	6
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	177	8
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	155	8
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	6
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	7
The Orange Box	161	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Outland	207	7
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	181	6
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	183	6
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	235	8
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	9
PES 2012	210	7
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	169	6
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	9
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	160	7
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	232	5
Portal 2	205	10
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	6
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	8
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	181	7
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	216	7
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	236	7
Pure	171	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	6
Quantum Of Solace	175	5
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	167	8
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	8
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	8
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	8
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	7
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	235	8
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	193	9
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	8
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	211	7
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	7
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	7
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	177	8
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	8
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	210	9
Resonance Of Fate	191	8
Retro City Rampage	228	7
Ridge Racer 7	151	7
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	6
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	8
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	5
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	5
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	2
Risk: Factions	202	8
Rock Band Blitz	223	8
Rock Band	169	9
Rock Band 2	179	9
Rock Band 3	199	9
Rocksmith	223	7
Rogue Warrior	188	1
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	4
Rune Factory Oceans	220	5
RUSE	197	8
The Saboteur	187	6
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	7
Sacred 3	247	6
Saints Row 2	172	7
Saints Row: The Third	211	8
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	6
SBK Generations	220	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse	194	9
Savage Moon	175	8
Saw	186	5
SBK Generations	220	5
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	9
Section 8: Prejudice	209	8
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	8
Sega Rally	158	9
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	7
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	7
Shadows Of The Damned	207	8
Shank	197	8
Shatter	183	9
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	7
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	7
ShellShock 2: Blood Trails	177	3
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	6
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	8
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	7
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	6
The Simpsons Game	160	8
The Sims 3	199	8
The Sims 3: Pets	212	7
SingStar	159	8
Singularity	195	8
Siren Blood Curse	170	6
Skate	159	8
Skate 2	175	8
Skate 3	192	8
Skullgirls	218	8
Sleeping Dogs	222	8
The Sly Collection	200	8
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	6
Sniper Elite V2	218	5
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	4
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	5
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	6
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	8
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	4
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	7
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	9
Sonic Generations	212	7
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	5
Sonic Unleashed	175	4
Sorcery	219	7
SoulCalibur IV	169	9
SoulCalibur V	214	8
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	8
Spec Ops: The Line	220	7
Spider-Man 3	155	3
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	3
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	6
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	5
Spin Jam	174	3
Splatterhouse	200	5
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	7
Split/Second: Velocity	192	9
Sports Champions	196	8
Sports Champions 2	225	6
SSX	216	4
Stacking	203	8
Starhawk	219	8
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	6
Star Trek	231	5
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	5
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	6
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	6
Star Wars: Pinball	230	7
Start The Party!	196	7
Stormrise	178	5
Stranglehold	159	6
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	9
Street Fighter IV	176	9
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	8
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	7
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	9
Stuntman: Ignition	157	8
Super Stardust HD	155	7
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	5
Superstars V8 Racing	181	6
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	7
Super Street Fighter IV	191	9
Supremacy MMA	211	4
Syndicate	216	7
Tales Of Graces f	222	7
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tales Of Xillia	234	7
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	7
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	8
Tekken 6	184	9
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	9
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	6
Tetris	202	8
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	6
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	6
The Last Of Us	233	10
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	5
The Walking Dead	231	9
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	2
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	6
Time Crisis 4	166	7
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	5
TimeShift	162	7
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	5
TNA Impact!	171	7
Tokyo Jungle	223	8
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	8
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	7
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	7
Tomb Raider	229	9
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	8
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	8
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	7
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	7
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	5
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	4
Top Spin 3	168	7
Top Spin 4	203	6
Toy Story 3	195	8
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	6
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	7
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	8
Trash Panic	181	7
Trine	184	8
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	5
Trinity Universe	194	6
Tron Evolution	200	1
Tumble	198	7
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	4
Turok	163	4
Twisted Metal	216	6
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	9
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	8
UFC Undisputed 3	215	8
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	9
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	8
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	10
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	9
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	1
The Unfinished Swan	225	7
Unreal Tournament III	162	8
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	5
Valkyria Chronicles	173	8
Vanquish	197	9
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	7
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	9
Virtua Tennis 3	150	9
Virtua Tennis 4	205	7
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	8
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	8
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	6
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	5
Warhawk	157	8
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	1
Warriors Orochi 3	217	5
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	5
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	2
Wet	184	4
Wheelman	178	7
Where The Wild Things Are	188	5
White Knight Chronicles	190	5
White Knight Chronicles II	207	4
WipEout HD	172	8
Wolfenstein	183	7
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	8
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	8
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	7
WWE All Stars	204	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	5
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	9
X-Men Destiny	211	3
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	7
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	3
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	6
Yakuza 3	191	8
Yakuza 4	203	8
Yakuza 5*	264	9
Zen Pinball 2	224	9
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	8

VITA



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	7
Army Corps Of Hell	217	6
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	7
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	3
Everybody's Golf	215	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	8
Broken Age	257	5
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	2
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	8
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	9
Dead Nation	201	8
Destiny Of Spirits	244	7
Dokuro	230	7
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	8
Escape Plan	216	8
FIFA Football	216	8
fIOW	151	9
Flower	176	8
Gravity Crash	187	8
Gravity Rush	219	9
Hotline Miami	233	9
Hustle Kings	216	8
Joe Danger	194	9
Killzone: Mercenary	236	9
LittleBigPlanet	223	9
Little Deviants	215	6
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	8
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	221	7
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	5
Mortal Kombat	219	8
MotorStorm RC	217	8
Muramasa Rebirth	234	8
New Little King's Story	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	6
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	8
Orgarhythm	230	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
Persona 4 Golden	228	9
PixelJunk Monsters	163	9
Puddle	222	8
Rayman Origins	216	8
Reality Fighters	215	5
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	5
Ridge Racer	216	4
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	8
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	3
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	7
Soul Sacrifice	232	9
Sound Shapes	223	8
Superbeat Xonic	265	7
Superfrog HD	234	4
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	7
Sumion: Demon Arts	230	4
Super Stardust Delta	216	8
Tearaway	239	8
Terraria	232	8
Touch My Katamari	216	8
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	8
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	8
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	8
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	8
Unit 13	216	6
Velocity Ultra	233	8
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	8
Virtue's Last Reward	227	8
WipEout 2048	215	9

*denotes import review

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

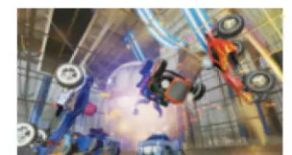
Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Earth Defense Force 4.1
WHY (was it chosen?)
Blasting bugs is oddly cathartic

LUKE ALBIGÉS

I'VE ALWAYS HAD a soft spot for this quirky series and returning to this latest release has been a blast. Better yet, I've managed to convince a bunch of others in the office to play it as well, meaning we can all team up and enjoy the nonsense together. Co-op gives me real *Lost Planet 2* vibes and yes, that is a good thing as far as I'm concerned – there can be few people on the planet who enjoyed Capcom's multiplayer-focused sequel as much as I did. I made the mistake of looking at *EDF*'s Trophy list and that gives me *Lost Planet* flashbacks, too – the grind is SO real and the Platinum is basically impossible as a result. That's not really the goal here, though. *EDF* is just my sci-fi *Dynasty Warriors* stand-in for when I don't want to think about things for a while, and it plays the part to perfection.



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Rocket League
WHY (was it chosen?)
What, you didn't see this coming?

LIAM WARR

YOU'RE NOT GOING to believe this, but I played a different game the other day. No, really. It wasn't a PS4 game (hence my pick here) but my other vice, *Football Manager* on PC. The two work quite well together – the slower pace of *FM* is a great way to wind down after a particularly intense game of carball, although both have the potential to make me equally angry...

NEXT MONTH IN

PLAY.



HANDS-ON VERDICT!

FINAL FANTASY XV

The epic RPG is finally here – was it worth the wait?

ON iOS & ANDROID 29 SEPTEMBER

